

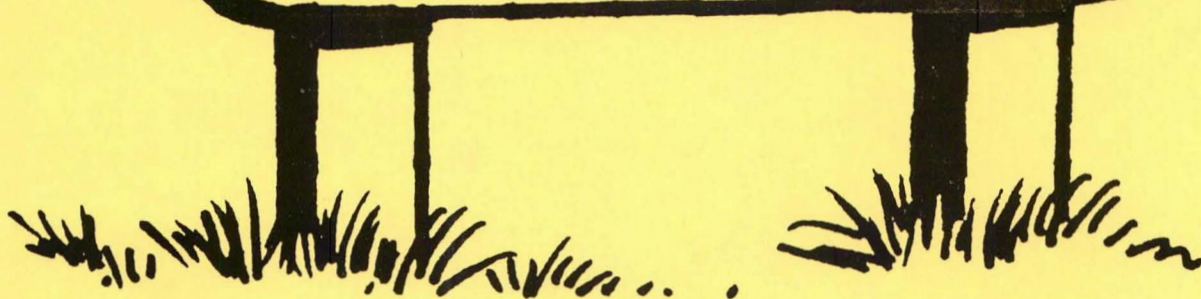
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BENAVITCH

**A HISTORY
AND INTERPRETIVE PROPOSAL
for
SHERANDO LAKE
RECREATION AREA**

GEORGE WASHINGTON
National Forest

**Clemson Class of 1990
May 31, 1991 Final Copy**



A HISTORY AND INTERPRETIVE PROPOSAL

for

SHERANDO LAKE RECREATION AREA

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This paper was prepared as a student project in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Professional Development for Outdoor Recreation Management Program at Clemson University. It in no way reflects USDA Forest Service policy nor are the opinions expressed those of anyone other than the author.

ABSTRACT

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TITLE:

A History and Interpretive Proposal for Sherando Lake Recreation Area.

ABSTRACT:

Sherando Lake Recreation Area is a significant recreation area on the George Washington National Forest and also a significant cultural resource. The following quotation is from the 1990 Inventory of Historic Structures for the Jefferson and George Washington National Forests, prepared by Land and Community Associates of Charlottesville, VA: "All the buildings [at Sherando Lake], in addition to the landscape, have remained in excellent condition despite heavy recreational use. The original integrity of the CCC-era design remains intact today, making the Sherando complex the best example of a CCC-era recreation area found in the Jefferson and George Washington National Forests. The Sherando Lake Recreation Area appears individually eligible for the state and national registers as an exemplary CCC-era recreation area, but could also be included in a thematic nomination of CCC-era buildings in Virginia's national forests."

This project involved researching and preparing a history of the recreation area and CCC camp that built it. This history provides the basis for an interpretive program. The research also provided various media, such as oral history interviews and historical photographs, that could be used in the interpretation of the area. The interpretive proposal describes the area and its facilities. The proposal identifies alternative methods of interpreting the construction of the area and the CCC experience.

Keywords:

Interpretation, CCC history, recreation area

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Summary: The intent of this project is to present the visiting public at Sherando Lake Recreation Area, and the George Washington National Forest, with an in-depth picture of what life was like in a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp in the 1930's, and to describe the construction of the recreation area and other projects. Much of the developed recreation and transportation infrastructure of the George Washington National Forest was constructed by the CCC. After the CCC company was disbanded in 1941, the camp was used as a Civilian Public Service (CPS) facility for conscientious objectors, administered by the Church of the Brethren. In February, 1944, the CPS group moved to a camp in Bedford, Virginia and Camp 8 was converted to a German Prisoner of War (POW) stockade. It served in this capacity until January, 1946. Little work has been done to date recording and interpreting this entire story. Forest visitors and local area residents have a keen interest in the CCC and their accomplishments. The project provides an example of how the CCC story can be recorded and gives alternative methods to present it.

Several methods of research were utilized. The greatest repository of information about the CCC era lies with former CCC enrollees and retired Forest Service and military Personnel who participated in the program. Oral history interviews were conducted with a cross section of personnel who were assigned to the CCC camp. Interviews were video and audio taped and then transcribed on the Data General word processor, providing three forms of media available for use in interpretive programs.

Interviews averaged two hours in length. In many cases, these individuals provided photographs, artifacts and documents that were useful in the research and as media for interpretive exhibits or programs. The National Archives and Record Service in Washington, D.C. was visited. CCC materials are located in Record Group 35. Civilian Public Service materials are located in Record Group 79, and Enemy Prisoner of War materials are located in Record Group 389. This source provided inspection reports, education reports, lists of work accomplishment, and various types of correspondence. Many of the questions used in the oral interviews were developed from these materials. The National Archives also provided photographs. The Forest Supervisor and District Ranger offices were researched. This source provided photographs and correspondence relating to specific projects and incidents. Finally, a literature search was conducted for publications relating to the CCC program and camp life.

Every effort was made to locate interview subjects who would represent the entire period of the camp existence. After the interviews were transcribed and all research materials gathered, I attempted to assemble a historical record that would flow chronologically from 1933 to 1946. Because of gaps in information and the nature of the material in the oral history interviews, I found this was impossible. The final product uses the interviews and research material to describe processes, events, and experiences, while striving to maintain chronological integrity.

Current information on interpretive planning puts great stress on using an interdisciplinary team approach to develop specific plans. My recommendation is to form a team to develop an interpretive plan for Sherando Lake, telling the CCC story and history of the recreation area, based on the history provided in this report.

LIFE
IN A
CCC CAMP

A History
of

Camp NF-8

Sherando, Virginia

May 15, 1933 to May 11, 1951

by

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This paper was written to satisfy partial requirements for completion of Clemson University's Outdoor Recreation Short Course and does not necessarily reflect U.S. Forest Service Policy.

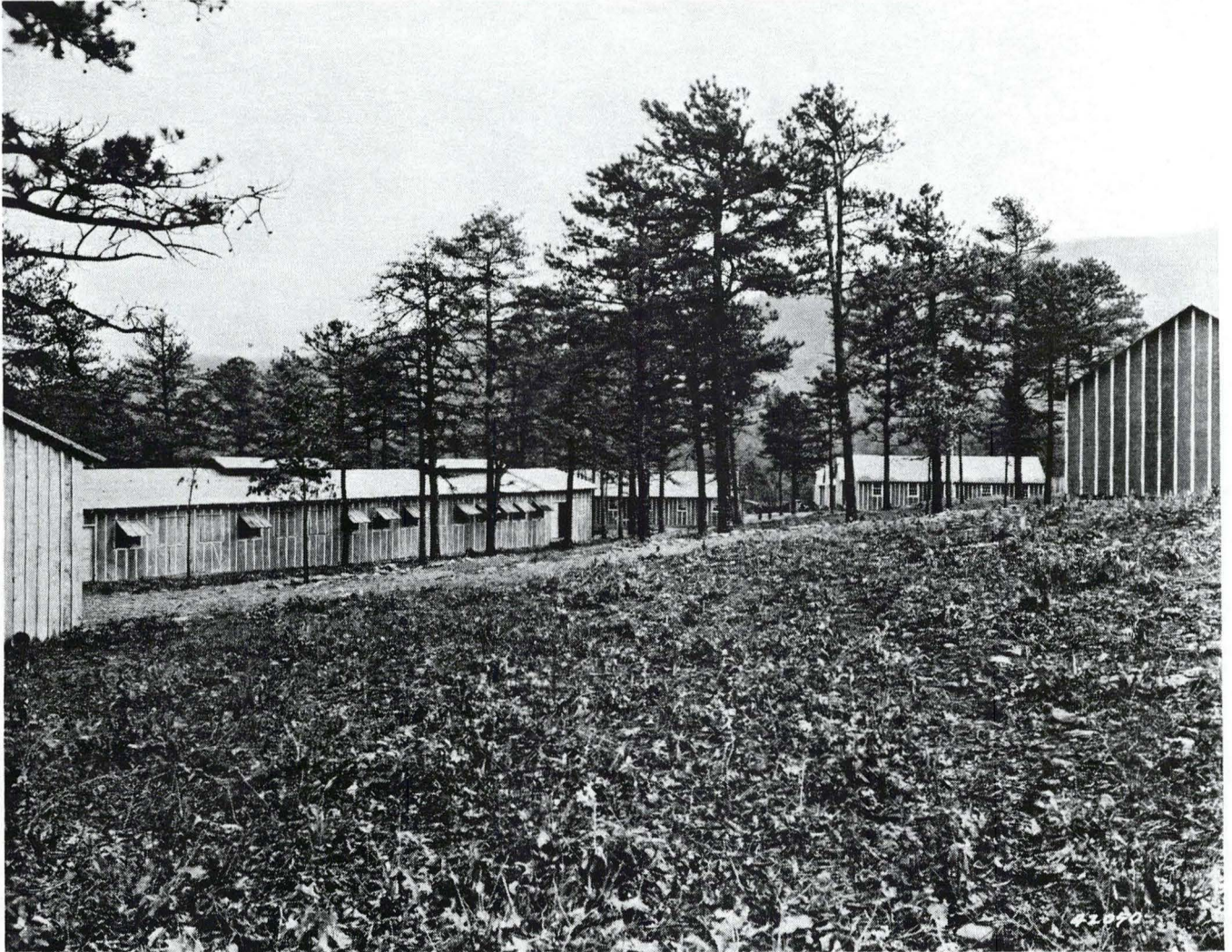


Figure 1. Civilian Conservation Corps Camp NF-8, about 1936 (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

INTRODUCTION

Economic depression! Besides war, it is one of the most serious afflictions that can come upon a nation. The Great Depression of the 1930's left millions of people unemployed, in bread lines, begging, and roaming the countryside. By 1933, hundreds of thousands of young men, 15 to 24 years old, were unemployed and without hope.

The depression did not affect just one economic class or segment of the population. Larry Ballard of Chester, Virginia recalls the period:

The youth in this country had nothing to do. It wasn't just my family or your family, but everybody's family. We didn't know the rich from the poor. The rich were losing what they had, and the poor were getting poorer. It was terrible. You couldn't buy jobs. People who had been to college, it didn't do them any good. There was no work.

During this same time, the nation faced a crises with its natural resources. Decades of exploitation of forest lands for private gain and poor farming, forestry and grazing practices had left vast areas of the country in virtual ruin. There were devastating floods and dust storms as a result.

Clearly, the stage was set for something decisive and dramatic to be done to attack these unprecedented conditions. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention in Chicago on July 2, 1932, first suggested a national conservation plan that would employ millions² On March 21, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent this message to the 73rd Congress:

I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects.

More important, however, than the material gains, will be the moral and spiritual value of such work. The overwhelming majority of unemployed Americans, who are now walking the streets and receiving private or public relief would infinitely prefer to work. We can take a vast army of these unemployed out into healthful surroundings. We can eliminate, to some extent at least, the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability. It is not a panacea for all the unemployment, but it is an essential step in this emergency...I estimate that 250,000 men can be given temporary employment by early summer if you will give me the authority to proceed within the next two weeks.³

The President used the existing departments of War, Agriculture, Interior, and Labor to organize and run the program. The U.S. Army was responsible for establishing ,supplying and operating the camps. The Department of Labor managed the selection of enrollees. The Departments of Agriculture and Interior and various state agencies were responsible for providing and supervising work projects. The organization was called Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), but the name used by President Roosevelt in his speech to Congress was the one that stuck. The name Civilian Conservation Corps was made the official name in 1937 by Act of Congress.⁴

On March 31, 1933, the Seventy-third Congress gave the president authority to spend \$300 million on a civilian conservation corps. On April 5, 1933, the president issued Executive Order Number 6101, which set up the Civilian Conservation Corps. On April 10, 1933, the first 25,000 men were enrolled in the program, and in August of the same year there were 300,000 men in CCC camps throughout the nation. The Seventy-fifth Congress restated the purpose of the corps, making formal through congressional action what had been done under the executive order. The corps continued to operate in a manner that would provide "employment, as well as vocational training, for youthful citizens of the United States who are unemployed and in need of employment." The program provided for a limited number of "older" youths, authorized by Congress, all of whom were either war veterans or Indians. Most enrollees were, in accordance with the law, unmarried male citizens between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three. They could enroll for not less than six months and not more than two years. They were provided food, clothing, and shelter and were paid \$30 per month, of which \$25 was sent to their families or saved for them.⁵

"The young men came from many backgrounds and circumstances, from both rural and urban areas. Many had never seen a National Forest, much less had any outdoor experience in a forest or mountain environment. Others came from rural southern areas, sons of tenant farmers and sharecroppers, who had existed in depressed conditions with inadequate nutrition for many years. Some from urban centers, lacking job or recreational opportunities, had drifted towards delinquency. Many had limited education, some to the point of illiteracy. Once enrolled, each boy had the opportunity to remedy these collective deficiencies."⁶

CAMP ESTABLISHMENT

Virginia was part of the Third Army Corps, which was comprised of parts of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. The army corps areas were further divided into districts and sub-districts. Camp NF-8 was in District No. 4, headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, and in Sub-District No. 14 (Moormans River) headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia.⁷ All camps were designated by letters and numbers indicating their classification regarding either land ownership or type of work. Numbers were assigned under each of these classes by States.⁸ For Camp NF-8, the NF stands for National Forest and the number 8 refers to the 8th camp formed in the state of Virginia.

Each CCC company was also assigned numbers by Army Corps area and order of formation. Less formally, camps also received names, most of which would be after a geographical place or some special personage.⁹ The 351st CCC Company was assigned to Camp NF-8. The "3" indicated the Third Corp Area and "51" indicated it was the 51st company formed. Camp 8 has gone by several names during its life. It has been called the Sand Springs camp, for the spring where it got its drinking water; Camp Sherando, for the community name; Camp A. Willis Robertson, for Representative Robertson from the 6th Congressional District of Virginia; and simply Camp 8, the current name used by the Forest Service and area residents.

The 351st Company was organized at Fort Monroe, Virginia on May 8, 1933. On May 14th, 1933, one hundred and eight-five enrollees, four officers and four regular army enlisted men, left Fort Monroe for Sand Spring, Virginia, arriving May 15,

1933.¹⁰ Larry Ballard, of Chester Virginia, was in the original group that formed the 351st Company and recalls the experience:

We went to Fort Monroe, Virginia. That's where we received our inoculations, fitted for uniforms, ones the Army couldn't use anymore. We stayed at Fort Monroe for about five days. They kept us pretty busy while we were there, doing something. They gave us calisthenics there too. They thought we needed it, and a lot of us did need it, because we were not used to work. It was hard for some of the men to take. They were kind to us, and constantly made exceptions. They would tell us, "we know you are not military, but we are, and you are going to have to do as we say." That was hard for some of the boys who were not used to doing what they were told to do. Discipline became very good, and got better as we stayed in the camp. They made companies, just like a military company. Ours was the 351st Company. We were assigned a commander, a doctor, a lieutenant, two sergeants, and a corporal, strictly Army. They moved us by train. They told us we were going to Lyndhurst, Virginia. When we got to Lyndhurst, there were trucks waiting for us. It was a special train that brought us, and when we got to Lyndhurst, we were side tracked. We got off and climbed into the trucks and were hauled up to camp. We were just like a bunch of cattle that I had seen unloaded from the drought stricken area of the west just before that. We milled around, and then got on the trucks and wondered what's next. We had no equipment with us to worry about. We had been given a bag lunch at Fort Monroe to eat on the train. It was a nice day. The sun was shining, but it was cool. The uniforms were warm so we weren't uncomfortable. We passed down this little road that goes through Sherando, and I thought what a quaint little place. We did not see a great deal of people. The ones we did see would stare at us as we went by. They didn't know what the hell the CCC was. They thought possibly that we were criminals, from prison or something. When we arrived at the camp, there was nothing there but trees, rocks, and brush. Some of the trees had already been removed, the bigger ones. They had anticipated our arrival. I don't know who had cleared out the area, but they hadn't done it all, just enough so we could get started. Well, we unloaded, and they said this is where you are going to live men, for the next 6 months. We started by putting up our tents. We didn't get them up very well at first, just enough to stay out of the weather for the night. We had cots. Eventually, we put floors in the tents, but for the first few weeks, there were no floors, just dirt. As I said, the tents weren't put up as well as they should have been, so the next day we tightened the ropes and so forth. We put the tents up in rows. Everything had to be measured, so many feet between each tent, make sure your ropes are in line. We had to put up water bags for drinking water. We got our water from Sand Spring, which is down on the road. It was just a spring then. Later it became more sophisticated. They concreted it in and pumped it to a holding tank for pressure. That spring handled all our water needs. We took showers and it was like ice water. You didn't need ice, because Sand Spring water is just like ice water!



Figure 2. The original Camp NF-8, 1933. (Photo by Larry Ballard)

The early days of the life of the 351st company were similar to pioneering. Rocks as well as trees had to be removed, water was brought from a distance for cooking and drinking, and the men washed themselves and their clothes in a nearby creek [Back Creek]. But they went to work in the spirit of pioneers and in spite of their bleak surroundings stuck it out and saw the establishment of a camp that was later to be considered the best looking in the state of Virginia.¹² Larry Ballard describes those first weeks:

The first few weeks, there was not enough time in 24 hours to do all the things we were supposed to do. They had to put up a kitchen, of course. That was a tent also, and was one of the first things we did because we had to eat. I must say, the food at first....well, I was disappointed. I didn't know if I could take it or not. We had a lot of scrambled eggs, and I don't eat eggs. For most of the men, including me, the food was much better than what we had at home, because there was very little food at home. Eventually, the first

thing they built there was a permanent kitchen. What we did for the first weeks was to cut brush and pick up rocks. Cut brush and pick up rocks! I have never seen so damn many rocks. Different sizes, some of them so big it would take three or four men to lift them. The rock was hauled away and used along the fills and ditches along roads. The brush we cut there at camp was burned. We had to clear off enough brush to put our tents up that first day. One hundred and seventy men can work pretty fast, especially if they know they have to sleep there that night. We didn't do a very good job the first day though, but the next day and thereafter we worked on cleaning up the area around. We were in tents about 6 months before we moved into wooden buildings. How the area was going to look was always in the back of their mind, that's the Army for you. It was always an attractive camp. It was a pretty camp. The dispensary and headquarters buildings sat up on a slope. The barracks where the men slept were located on a flat area with the¹³ Blue Ridge mountains in the background. It was very picturesque.



Figure 3. CCC boys taking a bath in Back Creek, 1933. Photo by Larry Ballard, Chester, VA.

The summer of 1933 saw the construction of a mess hall and the installation of local water and lighting systems. The autumn of the same year brought

completion of the barracks and the men moved indoors for the winter. The recreation hall was also completed and became the center of accumulating activities.¹⁴ The buildings were constructed by contractors hired by the Army. This construction provided employment for many local residents.

CAMP COMMAND AND ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Army was responsible for all aspects of the camp and for the welfare of the enrollees, except when they were under the supervision of the Forest Service on work projects. The typical command organization would be a Commanding Officer, usually a captain or first lieutenant; an Executive Officer, usually a first or second lieutenant; a Medical Officer, usually a first lieutenant; and a Mess Officer, usually a first or second lieutenant.

Occasionally, when Reserve Medical Officers were in short supply, the Army would contract the services of a local physician to serve the camp needs.¹⁵

Regular Army enlisted men were not normally assigned to a camp, with the exception of camp establishment in the early days of the program. A company commander would choose enrollees with leadership experience and abilities to serve the functions that non-commissioned officers would have performed. There would be an enrollee Senior Leader, who was commonly called the First Sergeant, and enrollee Leaders, who were called Squad Leaders.¹⁶

There were at least seven Commanding Officers assigned to Camp NF-8 during the life of the program. Listed in chronological order of their command, they were: Capt. Schmidt, Capt. Catlett, Capt. J.A. Betterly, 1st Lt. P.P. Liwski, 1st Lt. H.J. Waller, Capt. F.J. Bane, and A.K. Brown (rank unknown).

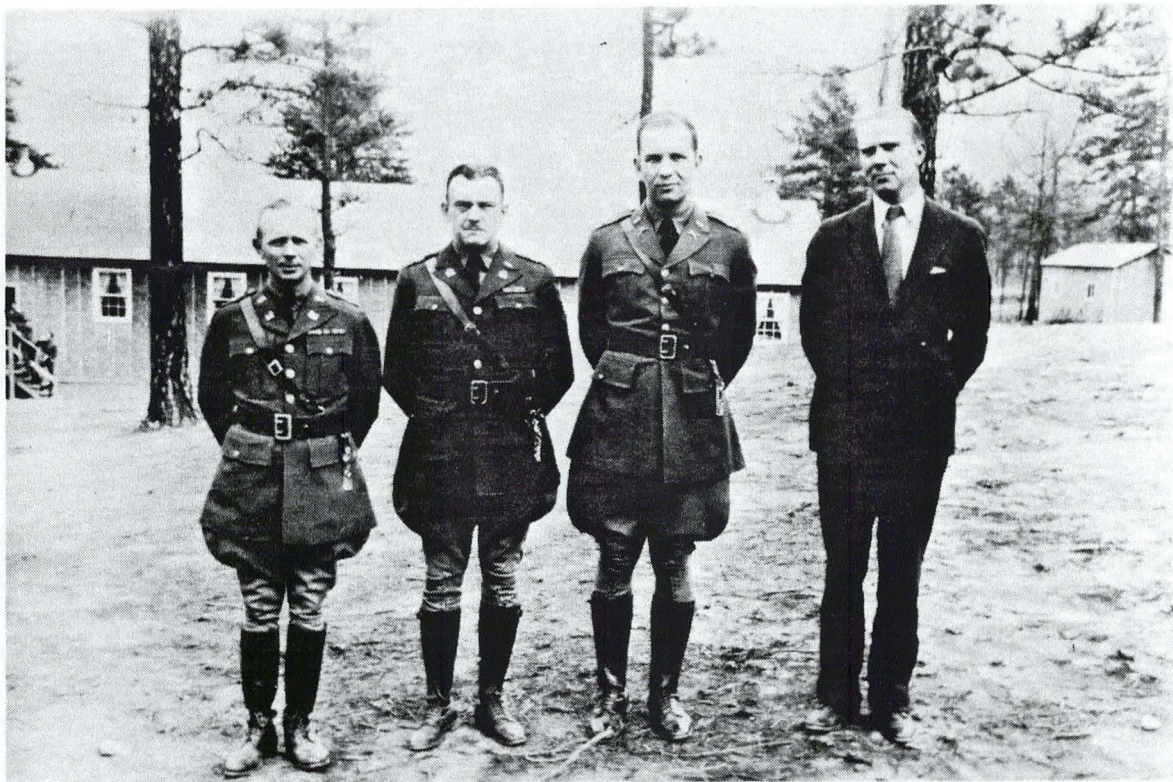


Figure 4. Camp NF-8 command group in 1935. From left to right: 1st Lt. P.E. Gray, 1st Lt. Bauman, 1st Lt. C.E. Routh, W.W. Burrus. (Photo courtesy of Roger Bryant, Sherando, VA)

The camp was run by military standards, with some exceptions. Colonel John A. Betterly, USAR Ret. recalls:

The day would start, of course, with first call. Remember, these were the days of pacifism, and we were not permitted to use the terms "reveille" or "retreat". These were Army terms. This was part of our official policy. We did not treat the boys as soldiers, they were civilians. You had first call and then you had last call. This remained policy throughout the period of the CCC's. At the first call, after breakfast, my first sergeant would march the entire company, in formation, over to the Forest Service. Then Saunders would divide them up for the work projects. I was permitted to retain a cadre of people to maintain the camp. Those boys stayed with me at the camp. The cooks, the latrine orderly, my office staff consisting of the first sergeant and the clerk, and some mechanics and truck drivers, supply people. I would recruit these boys at my discretion. Some of them had ratings. Most of the time the boys would like the

camp work and would stay. The one job I had the most trouble keeping someone in was latrine orderly. ¹⁷



Figure 5. Last Call at Camp NF-8 in 1936. Note the photographer titled the photograph "Retreat". (Photo courtesy of Frank Haga, Waynesboro, VA)

The Company Commander had great latitude in managing the company. They were constantly challenged to use their wits in facing new and difficult situations. Colonel Betterly remembers his first command experience at Camp 8 [Col. Betterly arrived at camp on May 23, 1936]:

I was relieving Capt. Catlett. The first day I got there, we went all through the process of transferring command. I had to check all the property and finances. By supper-time, we had finished. We were sitting up in the quarters and I heard some footsteps, a crowd of people, coming up the gravel walk to the officers quarters. I thought they were a bunch of men coming up to say good-bye to Capt. Catlett. I didn't want to interfere with that, so I stayed in the officers quarters and he went out to speak to them. He was out there a couple of minutes, then he came in and said "well, it's your problem Betterly, I'm through." So I went out and said, "what's the

trouble?" Shorty Tray, he was their spokesman, he stepped up and said "Captain, we wanted to tell you what we are going to do before we do it". I said "what's the matter." He said, "these damn rebels have been giving us a hard time." He was from Pennsylvania. He said, "we're going to start down at the bottom of the barracks and we are going to fight our way as far as we can go. We're only 25 against 150, but they are sure going to know that we've been here." I thought, "Holy Smokes, my first night on duty and I have got a riot on my hands." So I said, "I'll tell you what Shorty, let's go up back in the field here and talk a bit, because if you're going to do this, I'm going to have to face an investigation, and I want to know all the facts, so you tell me what's the problem." So we went up in the field in back of the officers quarters. They sat in a half circle. I started at one end and made each man get up and give me his name, where he was from, his home, and tell me what his problem was. Well, you know, with 25 men that would take time, so along about half past two or three o'clock in the morning, Shorty stepped up and said, "Captain, I'm so damned tired now that I couldn't fight if I had too." So I said, "I'll make a deal with you. If you will promise, for the following week, to cause no trouble, do exactly as I tell you and go where I send you, I'll promise to send you back to Woodson next Saturday." They were in on temporary duty, you see, some extra work for the project [recreation area and dam at the lake]. They came from Woodson, Virginia [Camp NF-16] which was a Pennsylvania company that had been sent down to Virginia. So Shorty turned around to the gang and said, "that's a fair deal, if they'll send us back to Woodson on Saturday, well we can put up with these damn Southern Rebels." They went back to their barracks. Now, they were all in one barracks, by themselves. I called the first sergeant, first thing the next morning and I said, "you get everyone of those men transferred to another barracks between two southerners. Don't let any two Pennsylvanians be together. He said, "Oh God Captain, there will be a massacre." I said, "no, these fellows have promised me they would do what I say. You don't know it, but I come from their home. Every one of those men are from Scranton, Old Forge, or Taylor. I know that bunch. They're a bunch of Polish miners. You go ahead and separate them. They promised me they would do what I said for a week." So he went down and placed every one of them between two of the Virginians. When work call came, Saunders, the forestry work superintendent, came in and said to me, "I can't risk this, there will be a massacre." I said, "no there won't. I won't turn them over to you unless you split them up on the work crew the same way as their sleeping arrangements." He said, "all right, but I'm making an official protest if there is trouble, it is your baby." I told him I would accept all the responsibility. They went through the week, and they did as they promised, there was no trouble. So Friday night, I called them all up to the officers quarters. I told them I had all the arrangements made with Richmond, which was headquarters, to transfer them back in the morning, and to get their gear all ready. Little Shorty stepped up and said, "Captain, we've changed our minds, we want to stay here permanent. All but one, one of us has a brother back at Woodson and he wants to go back there, but the rest of us want to stay here." I said, "you damn fools, I've been working my head off all week to get you transferred back, because you were supposed to be here for a while

longer." Well they said they wanted to stay, so I said, "well, what brought this about?" He said, "these damn Virginians are just like we are. They talk funny, but they say we do too. We're having a good time now. In fact, the guy next to me took me home for supper with his family twice this week." Well, I told them I would see what could be done. I got on the phone to Richmond, and got Col. Stan Grogan, the Executive Officer. I found out that Col. Grogan came from Scranton. He said, "what's the matter Betterly, you spent all week trying to get orders to send these men back." I told him what had happened, so he arranged to transfer 24 of the 25 to Lyndhurst. I told the boys next morning that 24 of them were assigned to this camp permanent. From that time on, since the policy was, when you replaced a man who left the C's, they replaced him from the same territory he came from. From that point on, we always had 25 to 30 Pennsylvanians from the Scranton area in the company. That was a little unusual. I just made damn sure they were never separated into a solid group again. We always kept them scattered throughout the barracks. They got along fine. Most of these Pennsylvanians were Polish boys from the mining country, and the Virginians were mostly from rural areas. They got a lot of fun out of the different ways they talked to each other. From that point on we had that Pennsylvania contingent in the company.

Another situation Capt. Betterly had to deal with, soon after his arrival, was the seemingly routine jailing of his men in Waynesboro, Virginia:

Every Saturday, we'd let a crew go into Waynesboro, you know, for relaxation and recreation. I found that the first couple of weeks after my arrival, that every Monday I had to go into town to get a bunch out of jail. The recreation truck would come back Saturday night minus the people in jail. The guy in charge of the party would get the word to me that they were locked up. They would be locked up for some minor thing, just making noise. I found out that the people in Waynesboro were afraid of the boys! Here were almost 200 young teenagers up in the mountains, all strangers, and they would come in on Saturday night, in uniform, and would end up walking the streets. This was something new for Waynesboro. They were afraid of them. So if they would stumble over a curb, they would be put in jail! That kind of stuff. The second week I was there, I went in to town to see the police chief. I said, "look, I don't like this, it is embarrassing to have my men locked up every week. How about me appointing some camp MP's. Instead of you locking all these men up, anybody you pick up, you turn them over to my MP's, and they will hold them on the truck and bring them back to camp, then I'll take care of them." He was a cooperative man, and he was willing to try it. So then I went to the head of the Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club in Waynesboro. I said, "I'd like each of your organizations to hold your next club meeting out at camp. I will furnish you with a meal and I'll provide you with a program. You conduct your business meeting in the mess hall, and then I will have the program for you." They said yes, because they wanted to see what the camp was like. The next week the Rotary Club came out. We had a good meal for them. It

was the same meal the boys had that night, but later in the evening after the boys had eaten. After their meeting, I went to the mess hall and told them "my first sergeant will take you down to the barracks area and you men split up, some of you go into every barracks and mix among the boys, introduce yourselves, and get to know them." I had already told the boys what was going to happen that evening. I told the Rotarians that I wouldn't be there and wouldn't have any officers there. There were probably around 20 to 25 Rotarians there that night. I told them to visit among the boys, ask them their names, where they're from, talk to them, then go your way. The following week, the Kiwanis did the same thing. I wanted them to know the boys, and the boys to know them. They were afraid of all these young people. Well, the next Monday, I didn't have any men in jail. The second week came, and nobody in jail. I called a couple of the boys in and asked them how come nobody in trouble over the weekend? One of the boys said, "Gee Captain, when we used to go into town, we didn't know a soul. We didn't care what we did. But being in town now, we can be walking down the street and some guy will call us by name. We're not going to make an ass of ourselves in front of somebody that knows us." That was the end of it! The only one locked up after that, was one that I had locked up because he forged a check. That was a distinct case and he was discharged. We never had any more trouble, in fact, it got so that the local industries there, particularly DuPont and Crompton, would give me first choice if there was a job available. They would say such and such a job was available,¹⁹ and I would send in two or three men for them to interview.

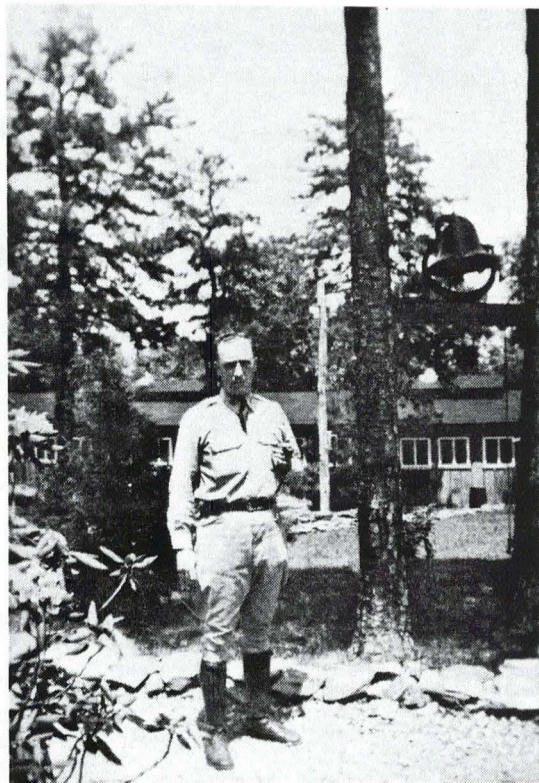


Figure 6. Capt. John A. Betterly, 1937. Photo by King Reynolds, Tallahassee, FL.

The camp was inspected regularly by the Company Commander or another officer. There would be competition among the enrollees for "best barrack" of the week. Colonel Betterly recalls these inspections:

After the work call, and the turning over of the men, I would make an inspection of the camp. This would be on a daily basis. I would go through the barracks, the latrine, the hospital, the kitchen.²⁰

James Blackwell describes the reward of "best barrack":

On weekends, the cleanest or best barracks would have the first chance to get a ride into town. Only so many trucks would go in, say three trucks, depending on what the captain wanted to go. The best barracks would get first choice. The ones that didn't get on a truck²¹, would have to hitch hike or whatever if they wanted to get to town.

The camp was also subject to inspection by District Headquarters personnel. Colonel Betterly relates what one of these inspections was like:

We had two inspectors from the Army. There was a sub-district inspector who came from Charlottesville, Capt. Jim Breth. Then we had a district inspector, either Col. Cron or Col. Grogan, Major Grogan then, he was the executive officer. He always made at least two inspections a year of all the camps. He would just drop in on you. Stan Grogan, oh, he was a stern guy. Every officer in the district was scared to death of him except me! I loved Stan, he and I got along fine. He would just land in camp and come up to headquarters and say he wanted to see the camp. And boy, he would go through that camp from one end to the other, from the latrine through the kitchen, through the barracks, the hospital, every phase of it, and then he would sit down in my office and go through all my paperwork, then move on. You would hear within the following week from him about the results of the inspection - good or bad!²²

Special Investigators were employed by the ECW apparatus under J.J. McEntee, the Assistant Director in Washington, D.C. These investigators were assigned to Sub-District headquarters and visited camps periodically to report on such things as administration, athletic activities and education, religious services, mess, health, work projects, and enrollee morale. They would also be called in if a particular problem arose that needed investigation. They reported directly to the Assistant Director in Washington.

CAMP DISCIPLINE

With 180 young men living and working in close quarters, situations developed that required disciplinary action. The public attitude in the 1930's was against militarism. Official literature concerning the CCC carefully stressed that a person did not enlist in the Army when he enrolled. The effects of this public attitude was to prohibit the use of normal Army disciplinary methods, even when necessary to maintain discipline. When the CCC was formed in 1933, the War Department notified the corps area commanders that members of the CCC had civilian status and would be turned over to civilian authorities for offences which normally constituted a violation of civil laws. The company commander, however, did have the authority to discharge an enrollee for refusal to work, continuous or serious misconduct, or unwillingness to abide by rules and regulations.²³ Punishment given an enrollee for a minor infraction of the rules was carried out in camp, or delegated to the Forest Service to carry out on the work project. Company Commanders established their own unwritten policies for discipline within traditional army guidelines. Some were lenient

and some were strict. Colonel Betterly relates a situation he encountered in camp and his policy for dealing with disciplinary problems:

Another problem I had right at the start of my command was with the mess sergeant, Trig Gilmore. I think it was the second week I was there. The first sergeant always handed me a list on Friday night of men who had been picked up for some disciplinary problem during the week, and would be assigned some work detail. The problem could have occurred out on the project or in camp. These men would be given some extra duty work over the weekend. The sergeant would always come in with the list for me to sign and he would post it, and those men would have to report for work. He came in with this list with about 25 or 30 names on it, and I looked at my hearing book, my record book, and I hadn't had any of these men before me for a hearing. Any man that goes on a punishment list in my company has to have a hearing before me! I'm the man who gives out punishment assignments, not the sergeants. So I asked him, "where did you get these names?" "Oh!", he said, "Trig gave them to me. They are men he gave punishment to in the mess hall." I said, "wait now, not until they have had a hearing before me! I'm the only one that can give punishment in the camp." I went over the list and I marked off every one that hadn't been up before my desk. When Trig came up to me about this I said, "Now look Trig, if they do something in the mess hall, they deserve punishment, but you turn them over to me. Every man, before he is punished, has a chance to defend himself." He didn't agree with that, no sir! He was in charge there. I told him that I was in charge. I told him that no man is punished without having a hearing. He said, "you are going to have a problem on your hands." Well, he meant that he wasn't going to cook. Well, hell, I knew more about cooking than he did. I had worked with my father in our restaurant and had been mess officer at my previous assignment. So I took the men off the punishment list, and Pat, the first sergeant said "you're going to have a problem. The men won't have anything to eat. The next morning, I went down to the mess hall and put on an apron and cap and I laid out the menu for that day. Gilmore was just walking around the camp. He was waiting for the men to come in and not have any supper ready and they'd raise cane, you see. He was basically mutinying! Gilmore had tried to get the other cooks to side with him, but they wouldn't. Well, we got together and prepared a real nice meal for supper. The gang came in from the forest that night, and I tell you, we had a meal for them. I was up in the headquarters, and all of a sudden I heard this big cheer from the mess hall. I asked whats the matter, and Pat said the boys are having supper. Trig came up to me afterwards and asked me what it was I wanted him to do. I told him that he was still the mess sergeant, and he was responsible for discipline there, but whatever charge he had against a boy, to turn it over to me, and I would have a hearing so that he could defend himself. If the charge was justified, he would be punished, but I would do the punishing. I said that as long as we had that understanding, that he²⁴ could be the mess sergeant. Well, we had no problem from then on.

THE FOREST SERVICE ROLE

The Forest Service was responsible for providing supervision, tools, transportation, and equipment to the CCC enrollees to accomplish work projects on the National Forest. The enrollee's work on the projects was also considered on-the-job training. They were encouraged to work at different jobs to broaden their experience base.²⁵

The Forest Service organization at the camp consisted of a Project Superintendent and a number of foremen, junior foremen, and technical specialists. The project superintendent implemented all the work plans the camp was responsible for. The foremen supervised crews of enrollees in various work projects. Some of the technical specialties were mechanic, heavy equipment operator, and blacksmith. These specialists were generally highly skilled in their craft. Eddie Van Fossen, a retired Forest Service employee, recalls the camp blacksmith:

Parson McGann was the blacksmith. He was an artist in the blacksmith shop. He could make anything. He made all the andirons in the fireplaces at the lake, hinges and stuff. He worked just like a horse and he'd sweat and sweat, all over his face, his face would be red. He was a valuable man. He sharpened the picks and repaired the shovels, any tools that needed work. You just as well not sharpen them if you didn't temper them right and if they get too hard they would break off. If they are just right, they will last from now on, and if they are too soft they will get blunt and be no good. Well, he could get them just exactly right. He was a pretty smart guy.²⁶

The project superintendent would select enrollees to be truck drivers. The drivers would haul the men out and back each day, and during the day would haul materials for the work projects. James Blackwell was a CCC truck driver and relates some of his experience:

One day Mr. Saunders asked me if I could drive a truck. I never had driven a truck before. I had rode in the front seat and watched how they did drive them though. So I said, "sure, I know how." So he said, "take my pickup and go get number 23." That was a dump truck. It was back at camp. I went in and parked his truck and got old 23. I didn't know exactly how to start it. It was on a bank there at camp, so I rolled it down the hill and got it started. I could change the gears all right, but I left the choke out, I didn't have sense enough to put the choke in. He had told me on my way back to stop at the crusher and pick up a load of rocks. On down the road, I noticed

the choke open, so I pushed it in, and then it ran all right. The choke was out and the truck wouldn't pull, it was flooding. Arnie Clark was another truck driver. He was at the crusher while I was getting loaded up. I asked him, "I don't know whether I can change gears with this load going up the hill, what must I do?" He said, "I'll tell you what you do. You take and put it in low gear after you come out of the crusher on to the road and just drive it on up there in low gear. I was going to the dam and it wasn't very far. And that's how I learned to drive a truck. From that I got pretty good, and they put me on driving a fire truck later.²⁷



Figure 7. James Blackwell (far right) in front of his truck "Old 23".
(Photo by James Blackwell, Lexington, VA)

The District Ranger was not directly involved in work project supervision. He did play a role, however, in work planning and inspection of the work. Eddie Van Fossen recalls visits by the Pedlar District Ranger:

The district ranger would come over once a week. A lot of times he would meet with people from the Supervisors Office. They would go out and inspect the work at Sherando Lake and change half of it and all that kind of stuff. He would make work plans and turn them over to somebody, he wouldn't come and supervise it.²⁸

The project superintendent worked for the forest engineer in the Supervisor's Office in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Work planning and coordination was carried

out between the District Ranger and the Forest Supervisor's staff. The plans were then given to the project superintendent to be carried out.²⁹



Figure 8. Carter T. Saunders (on right), Camp NF-8 Project Superintendent. (Photo credit unknown)

The Forest Service had a system at the camp to keep track of the enrollees during the workday. James Blackwell explains:

When you went to work, you had to go up by the Forest Service shed and get a number. Your number was on a tag in the office. You went past the window and called out your number, and they would give it to you, and you would go down to the trucks and they would take you to the job site. They didn't tell you which truck to get on, they would just load the truck up. They were dump trucks with benches and sides. They would give you the number, mine was 15, it was kept by your name on the board. After all the boys had got their numbers, they could find out who didn't come in to work that day. Then you turned your number in to whoever you were working for that day, and they would turn it in that night.³⁰

The Forest Service had separate quarters at the camp, and a separate dining room in the mess hall. The Forest Service personnel had a CCC enrollee assigned to them. Eddie Van Fossen explains what his duties were:

They had a Forest Service quarters and officers quarters. In the mess hall, the officers had one dining room and the Forest Service had another one. We paid \$15.00 per month for our food and we had a boy that made up our beds, a CCC orderly. He took care of the quarters, cleaned them, got our food and served it to us. It was pretty royal. We would of course tip him a little. The army didn't have anything to do with us. We went and came as we pleased. They took care of the boys but not us. We lived there just like we were out in a road camp somewhere. We could keep a private automobile there. If we had the money and wanted to, we could build a shelter for our car behind the army garage where they kept trucks.³¹

Relationships between the Forest Service and the Army were usually good. Colonel Betterly recalls:

I had nothing to do with work projects. I turned the company over to Mr. Saunders after breakfast, and he turned them back to me at the end of the day. I had no control over their work, and he had no control over the camp life. This generally worked very smoothly. Saunders and I had an excellent relationship. I think he was quite surprised at how the situation with the Pennsylvanians worked out, but he was as pleased with the outcome as I was. After breakfast, the boys went back to their barracks and straightened them up to get ready for inspection. When the work call blew, they lined up outside and marched over to the forestry office, where they would get their work assignments for the day. When they came in at night, and unloaded from the trucks, they were back under my control. It was my responsibility to see that they were provided with their lunches. It was a good arrangement, no question. My relationship with the Forest Service, I felt, was excellent. I never had any gripe at all with any Forest Service people, they cooperated with me completely. I would periodically go out with the truck that took the mess cans out for the boys lunch to see what it was they were doing. I didn't have any official capacity regarding the work projects, but I just had a personal desire to see what the projects were and what the men were doing. I was a civil engineer, and I was interested in the project itself. I had spent 6 years working, including building dams and bridges. I would talk with the Forest Service engineers about their work. I had a close relationship with the Forest personnel there.³²

On occasion, Forest Service personnel would, through their actions, have a lasting effect on a CCC enrollee. James Blackwell explains:

Donald Fauber and Jesse Fitzgerald were both Forest Service men. They helped me more than any people there. If they saw me doing something

wrong, or whatever, they would come and explain it to me, and tell me how to do it right. They more or less took me under their wing. When I went there, I had two teeth in front that were rotten, they were black in the middle. Jesse Fitzgerald asked me why I didn't have them taken care of. I said, "well, I don't have the money to do it." About a week later, he got me in the truck and took me to Waynesboro. He took me up to Dr. Vines office. He set me in the chair, I guess Jesse had made an appointment, and he fixed them two teeth. This was done by him, not the CC's, he paid for it. I offered to pay him back, but, no sir, he wouldn't let me. Donald Fauber and Jesse Fitzgerald taught me more than anybody. I give them credit for what I am today. If it hadn't been for them, I would probably...well, I don't know what would³³ of happened to me. Truthfully. Their influence on me was good.

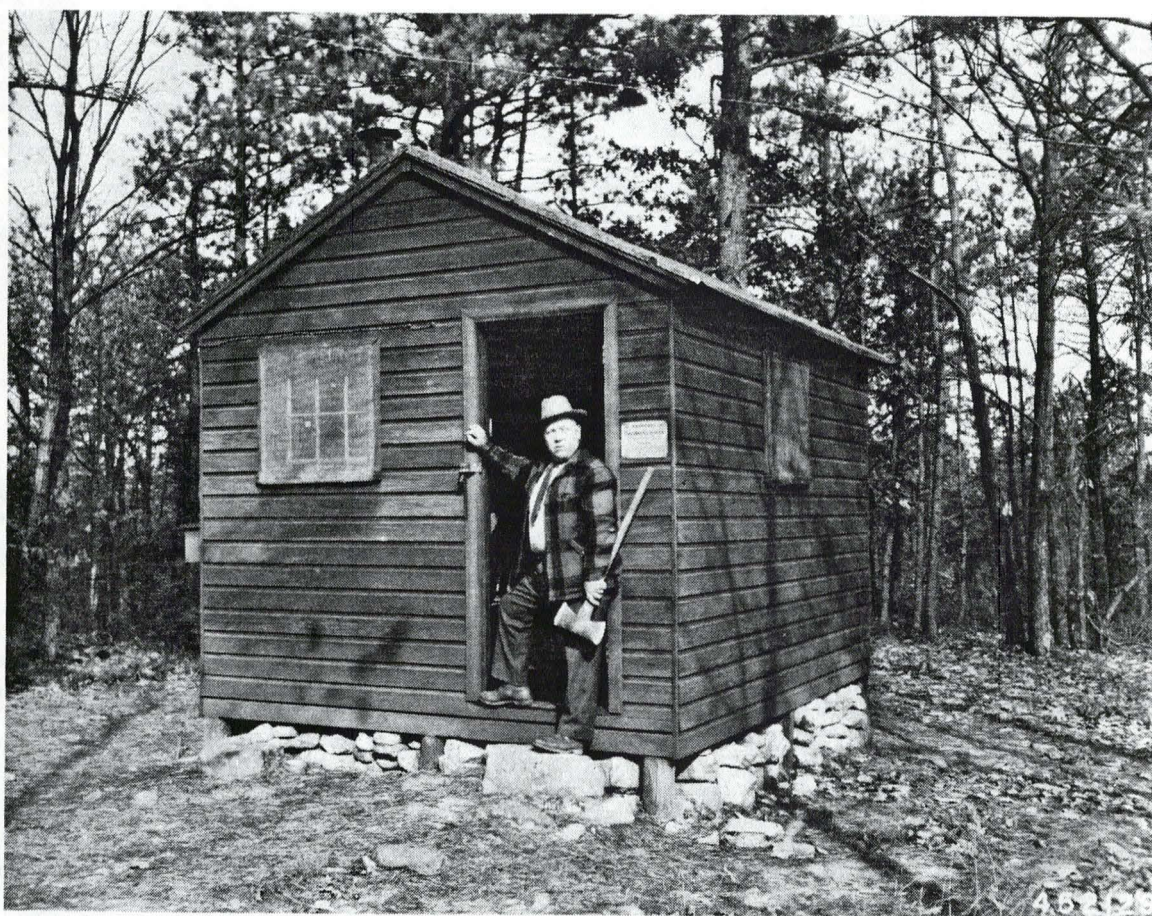


Figure 9. Donald Fauber at the game patrolmans cabin in Big Levels Game Refuge (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

LOCAL EXPERIENCED MEN

Each camp was authorized a quota of Local Experienced Men (LEM's). These men would be hired at the discretion of the project superintendent or the commanding officer. They would look for someone with experience in the local mountains, who wouldn't get lost in the woods, who knew how to cut and cruise timber, and build roads.³⁴ Men with special skills would also be sought out. These men would work around the camp as mechanics or general handymen. Most of the Local Experienced Men served as foremen for work crews on the projects. The base pay for LEM's was the same as for the CCC enrollee, \$30.00 per month. The LEM, however, would receive all the money at payday, no allotment was sent home.



Figure 10. A group of Local Experienced Men at Camp NF-8 from the Sherando/Love area. From left to right they are Lee Patterson, John Dedrick, Little Jim Patterson, Wallace Coffee, Mr. Gilbert, Elzie Patterson, Earl Harmon, Mr. England, B.G. Fitzgerald Sr., Big Jim Patterson, Lloyd Dedrick. (Photo credit unknown)

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CAMP

Several of the teachers in the educational program were women (WPA Instructors). Miss Pearl Coffey and Mrs. Nelly Todd taught literacy, arithmetic, reading, spelling, and writing.³⁵

In many instances, the presence of women (primarily officers wives) would make a difference in the lives of the enrollees. Colonel Betterly remembers some of these:

I remember the sorry recipe we had from the quartermaster for potato salad. Nobody would eat the stuff when we made it. One Sunday, I asked my wife if she would come out and make some real homemade potato salad for the boys, so she did. She put on a cap and apron and went down to the kitchen. The cooks helped her with the vegetables. K.P.'s did the cleaning up and she got up to her elbows in great big steel tubs mixing potato salad for 200 men. That night when they came in and sat down and ate, she got a cheer from the whole company. From that time on the camp had its own recipe for potato salad and the quartermaster recipe went down the drain.

My wife loved to come out to camp on weekends when I was on duty. My girl, who was about 5 years old, would go down to the mess hall and chisel the cooks out of something to eat. She would sing songs to them and they would give her something. She had the run of the place. My wife was interested in music. She had a little group [of CCC enrollees] that she organized. In fact they used to put a program on at the local radio station. We had an orchestra, and we had this little glee club she organized. The orchestra was composed of a violin, guitar, banjo, they played country and western music. They had a set program on radio. Her glee club had several radio appearances. She majored in music in³⁶ college. My wife was very interested in the camp and the company.

Following is an excerpt from an article that appeared in The Sherando Windjammer in the December 1, 1938 issue [Mrs. Waller referred to in the article was the wife of the commanding officer]:

On November 28 in the Camp Recreation Hall a Company Meeting was held in which Chaplin Steck gave a talk, Mrs. Waller played the piano, and a name was selected for the camp paper.

For about an hour after the meeting Mrs. Waller played old time favorites and other popular numbers. A group of men who liked to sing joined with her. Every one had a good time.³⁷ We thank Mrs. Waller for her helping us with camp entertainment.

EFFECTS OF THE CCC PROGRAM ON THE LOCAL AREA

After the camp became established and area residents realized that the program was a positive force, there was much interaction between the camp and the community, both economically and socially. Some camp provisions and services were obtained from local wholesalers and vendors.³⁸ The camp provided employment to a wide variety of personnel besides the enrollees. The CCC road projects, such as the Sherando/Love Road and the Love/Nash Road, opened up isolated mountain communities. This tended to have an effect on their standard of living.³⁹ The Sherando Lake Recreation Area and Big Levels Game Refuge provided the community with opportunities for recreation and brought tourists and recreationists to the area.

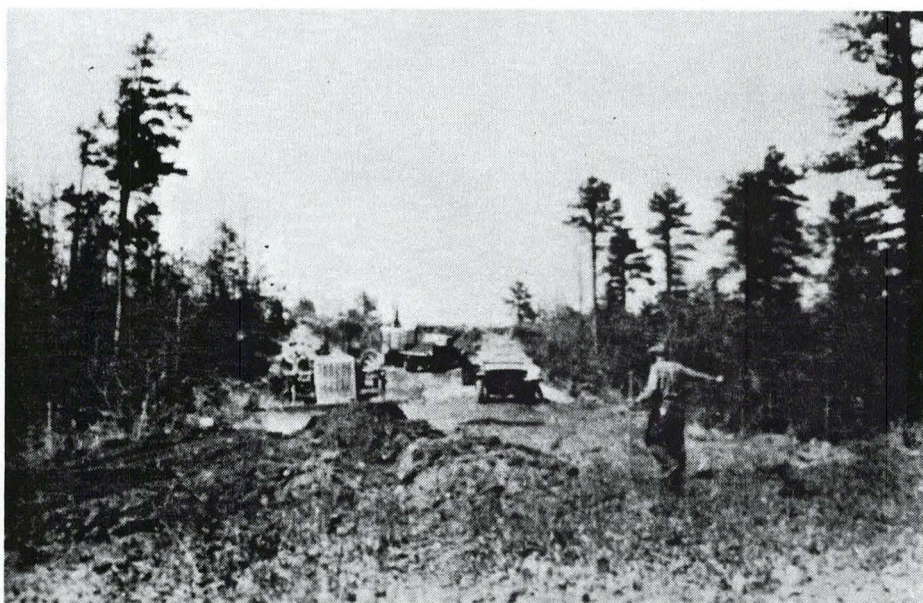


Figure 11. The Sherando/Love Road under construction, 1934. The road is now State Route 664. (Photo credit unknown)

The various projects of the camp were of great local interest. Colonel Betterly summarizes some of that interest:

We had relations with the business firms we dealt with. We got to know most of the local people. We were always glad to have visitors at the camp. People would feel free to come in and see us. They didn't do as much visiting in camp as they did to come up and see the the projects. They were vitally interested in what we were doing with the Forest Service. They were very interested in what we were doing, because that was going to have an effect on them. They were going to have a darn nice recreation area when we were through.⁴⁰

The social effects of the CCC program were also significant. Both the camp and area civic groups would sponsor activities such as dances for the enrollees. Roger Bryant remembers:

We would have dances, New Years dance, things like that. Girls would come in from town. The educational adviser would organize this. They would announce on the radio that we were going to have a dance up there at the camp. We'd have string music. The camp boys played. We would have refreshments, cold cuts and things like that. There were chaperones.⁴¹

Informally, the enrollees would organize their own outings. Larry Ballard remembers some of these:

They would loan us a truck for recreation. We would take our dates. We went on a picnic once, on Humpback Rocks. The girls fixed sandwiches and cake and pie. I remember they took lemons and made fresh lemonade. They got the water from a spring. We killed a couple of rattlesnakes that day. Another time we went to Crabtree Falls. They encouraged us to have recreation. We didn't have much money to spend, so picnics were right up our alley.⁴²

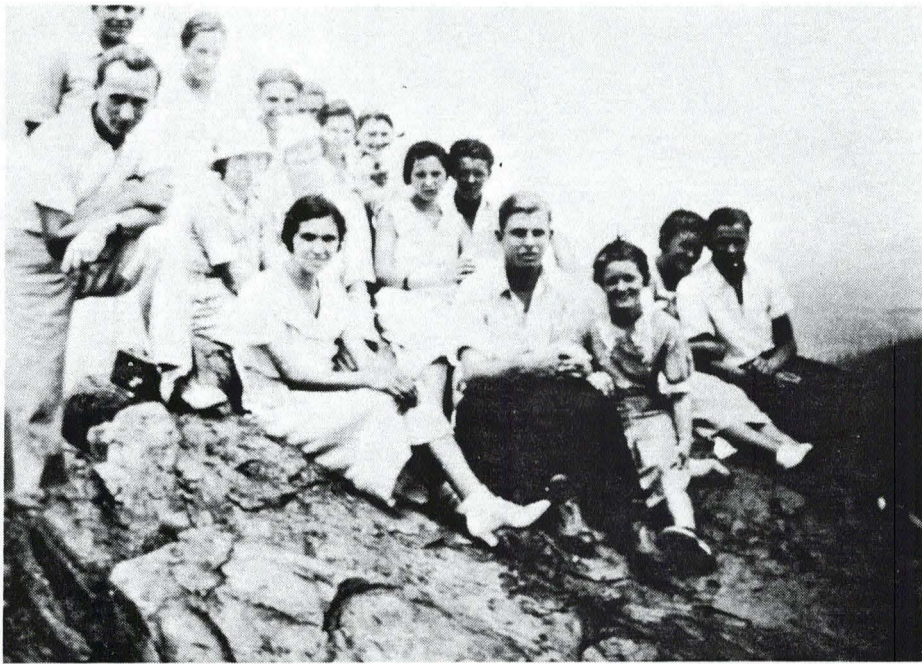


Figure 12. Picnic on Humpback Rocks, 1933. (Photo by Larry Ballard, Chester, VA)

Many of the enrollees married area women. Colonel Betterly stated:

If an enrollee was hired, he would be given an honorable discharge. An awful lot of the CCC boys settled there. A lot of the people in that area are the descendants of those CCC boys. As soon as the community got to know the boys, there was no longer that fear. In fact, the boys would⁴³ be invited in and offered dinner on Sunday with people they had met.

CAMP LIFE

Close relationships would often develop between the enrollees that would last throughout their lives. This is evident by the camaraderie displayed at gatherings and reunions of former CCC enrollees. Larry Ballard remembers how these friendships were established:

We would work as a unit during the day. You got to know the other men, but you didn't feel as close to them as you did the ones you worked with. You got to be almost like brothers. You were with them all the time, you ate with them, slept with them, and you worked with them, you were never away from them. We got to be very close.



Figure 13. Camp 8 pals.
Photo by Larry Ballard,
Chester, VA.

The enrollees were fond of pulling pranks and practical jokes on one another. Eddie Van Fossen recalls this experience:

When I first went up there, I wasn't was very big and I wasn't a fighter anyway. I was about half bothered by some of these guys. Some guy told me if you want to get along, just don't say anything. They're scared of somebody that won't talk, so I didn't do much talking and I got along just fine. I went over to town one night and when I came back I went over to my bunk and it wasn't there. I started reaching around and it was hanging up on those knee braces in the ceiling. I got something and climbed up the side of the wall and took my pocket knife and cut the rope they had it tied up with and you never heard such a clatter in your life. Everybody was supposed to be asleep, but they were waiting to see what I was going to do. When I got it down, they had short-sheeted it. I just pushed it out...I didn't say a word...I just got in and went to sleep and that was the last time they ever pulled a trick of any kind on me.



Figure 14. Interior of a barrack, Camp NF-8. (Photo courtesy of Frank Haga, Waynesboro, VA)

Colonel Betterly talks about another practical joke:

I remember the first group of new enrollees who came in after I took command. One of the first things that took place the next day was to give them their inoculations. So we thought as long as we had to do that we would also give the booster shots to about 6 or 7 men who were due. I couldn't understand why the next morning those 6 or 7 men rushed right up from breakfast to get at the head of the line for their shots, but they were there when the new rookies straggled along the walk behind them. The seven went in and then I found out what those rascals had in mind. As they came back out from having had their shots, they started to stagger and moan and waiver around. Well you know what happened. In a few minutes we had about a dozen rookies stretched out in the grass passed out cold, just from fright of what was going to happen to them. After that, we made it a point to never give repeat shots at the same time we gave rookies their shots.⁴⁶

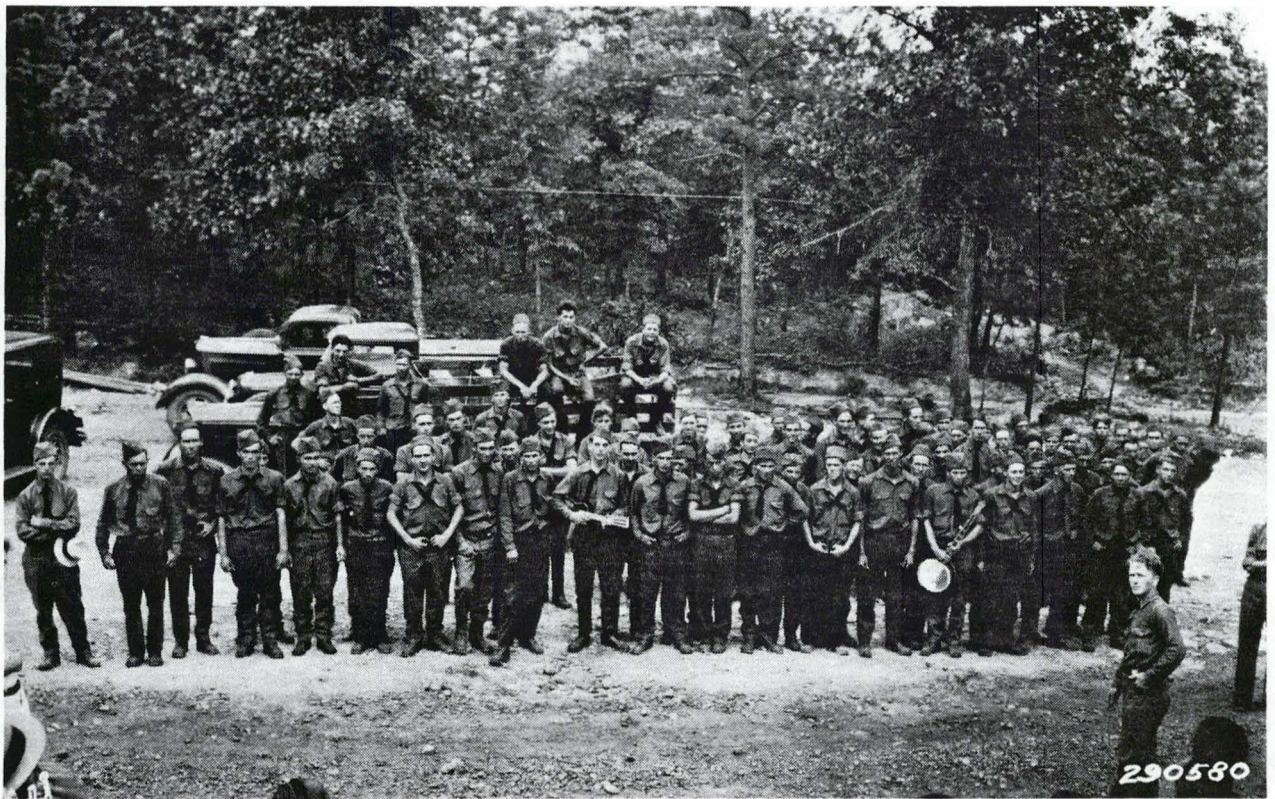


Figure 15. New arrivals at Camp NF-8, 1934. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

When an enrollee first arrived at camp, they found themselves in a completely new and often strange environment. Garland Priddy relates his first night at camp:

That night, October 31st, they gave us supplies, and we had to set up our beds. They showed us how to do it, although they taught us a little of that at Ft. Meade. I set my bed up and went out somewhere, and when I came back, somebody had stole my comfort. That was a blanket that you kept rolled up at the bottom of your bed, and you could put it on you when it got cold. I went up to the Army headquarters to see the man in charge, I think he was Capt. Catlett. I went up there crying almost and told him somebody had stole my blanket. He looked at me and said, "Son, that's real bad for people to steal like that. But I'm going to tell you one thing, a good soldier never loses." I thought a minute, and then I said, "all right captain, thank you." I walked out. Then I waited until the next new recruits came in and I got me my comfort back. I let it pass on to somebody else.

On rare occasions, the company officers would sponsor a beer party for the enrollees. This article appeared in the April 10, 1934 edition of the Spring Owl:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH MISTER! WE ALL HAD A LOVELY TIME.

We the boys of the 351st Company wish to express our appreciation to the officers of this company, who made our last beer party possible. We also wish to thank them for their consideration concerning the afternoon's entertainment which proved to be a general good time for all.

The beer party given on Friday, March 23, went over very quietly, yet successfully. Fifty-seven gallons of beer was consumed; six boxes of pretzels were used; cheese sandwiches were distributed by Simpson, the mess steward; and cigars and cigarettes were given out by Lieutenant Routh. String music and a black-face comedy was furnished for the evening's entertainment by the minstrel group.

There may be some members who were disappointed because the last party was so unlike the first one. Of course there were no broken teeth, swollen lips, nor bloody noses; even our beds were free of water. This we believe to be a coincidence, but nevertheless, we are looking forward, with a terrible thirst, to more and better beer parties. Larry K. Ballard.⁴⁸

Almost every enrollee received a nickname soon after his arrival. Roger Bryant explains:

Everyone had a nickname. The first sergeant would give you one to start with. He could just about read you out when you got there. If they didn't like the name, well, they couldn't help it. The sergeant named them and the name would stick. They had to put up with it. I didn't mind being called "Hillbilly" because I came out of the mountains.⁴⁹

Following is a sampling of nicknames, gathered from interviews and the camp newspapers: Fender Flaps, Soap Suds, Stretcher, Chicken, Susie, Rose, Wrestler, Bull, Army, Flamgolian, Sweetpea, Niggershoe, Floogie, Montana Slim. There is usually a story connected with each name.

The enrollees kept a number of pets. The original company that came from Fort Monroe, Virginia, brought an Airedale puppy with them. They named him Rags, and he became the camp mascot. He stayed at the camp for many years.⁵⁰ Their most interesting pets, however, were two bear cubs. Roger Bryant recalls:

They got them out of the woods after their mother got killed. They ran loose around the camp. They had their freedom. All the boys

played with them, picked them up, got them mean by slapping at them. They slept outside up around the shop. The bears would stand in the chowline. They'd go up with Rags to the front of the chow line. When the first sergeant blew the whistle for chow, old Rags would lead the chow line up there, walking in front of everybody, and the bears would sometime go along with him. Then they'd go around to the back door after everybody got inside and that's when I would⁵¹ feed them, the dog and the bears together, they got along real good.



Figure 16. Preston East (on right) feeding one of the pet bear cubs from a bottle, Camp NF-8. Photo courtesy of Charles Baker, Sherando, VA.

The food at camp was certainly a highlight. Most of the enrollees enjoyed it and thrived on it. Most found it better, and in greater supply, than what they got at home. Douglas Flint of Buena Vista, Virginia, stated that the food he had in camp every day was better than what his family had at home on Christmas Day.⁵² Major General Albert J. Bowley, Commander of the Third Corps Area, reported to the enrollees in 1937 that "the quantity and quality of the food you are fed has resulted from years of study made by the War Department. It has produced a gain of 12 pounds per man in previous 6 month periods of the CCC."⁵³ Roger Bryant was a cook at the camp for several years. He recalls the daily routine:

I had to get up at 3:30 in the morning to start breakfast. Your shift was over when you got the kitchen cleaned up around about 6:30 in the evening. It was a long day. Then you were off the next day. They had two crews, three cooks on each shift besides their KP's which were about 5 or 6. One guy took care of the mess hall, setting up dishes, plates and settings. Everybody ate out of dishes in the hall. That was the only job he had to do. He had a helper who would mop the floors and help with the tables. Then they had a guy that took care of the officers mess. He was a steward. That was his regular job, an officers steward. Then there was one for the Forest Service. The boys all ate out in the big mess hall. All the dining rooms were in the same building, just separate rooms. Everybody ate the same food though. The Forest Service and officers had their food brought to them and their plates taken away. We got a lot of praise for our food and service. Anybody could come by the messhall and pick up a sandwich when they wanted. The food was served in bowls, just like home style. The KP's would bring it out and set it on the tables. It would be on the table when you came in for chow. They would set down at the table and serve themselves from the bowls. If you needed more, you could come up to the warm table and fill up the bowls again. We had table waiters. You could eat all you wanted. Their motto was "take all you want but eat what you take"⁵⁴ We never served any warmovers, everything left went in the garbage.

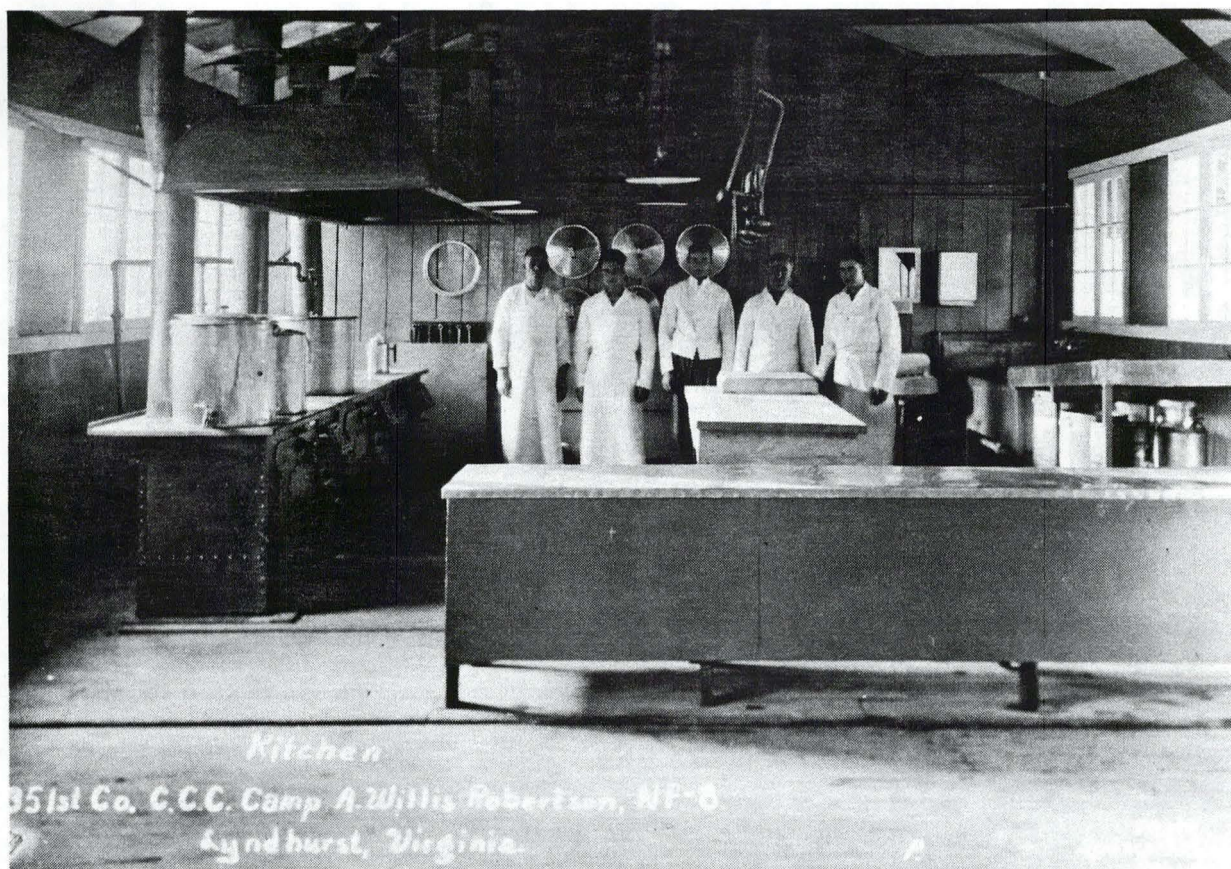


Figure 17. The kitchen at Camp NF-8. (Photo courtesy of Frank Haga, Waynesboro, VA)

The most popular day of the month was naturally payday. Although most enrollees received only \$5.00 per month, it provided them with the opportunity for a change of scenery. Colonel Betterly describes his preparations for the day:

Frank Haga, the company clerk, would make up the payroll. They had to sign it about 2 weeks ahead of the actual payday. The way we usually worked it was I would pick up Frank, go into town, cash a check at the bank, I would write the check at camp on the Army account. After I got the cash, we would take it to my house in town. We would always chisel a free meal off my wife that day. We would make up the payroll in envelopes with cash. We would take it back to camp, and when the boys came in that night from working, after supper they would line up at headquarters and I would hand out the envelopes with what cash they had coming. The company clerk would keep account of any charges or bills against each enrollee such as fines or debt owed the canteen. These would have been deducted from the enrollees total.⁵⁵

Frank Haga also talks about payday for the enrollees:

On payday there would be a big long line. It would be after work, and the boys would always want to go into town. Then the trucks would get loaded up and head for Waynesboro. They would be all over town. A lot of them had girls to see. When they came back in that night, they would be hollering and carrying on, all tanked up on beer.⁵⁶

James Blackwell remembers driving a truck to town on paydays:

The boys would like to see me drive a truck to town, because if they couldn't get on [not enough room], they would take off walking down the road before I left, and I would stop and let them load on, even though I already had a load. Sometimes I'd drive real slow, and they would run and jump on. The truck was only supposed to haul 25, but by the time we got to town, there might be 35 on board. We would park up behind where the post office is now in Waynesboro. The boys would then just go their own way, and would have to be back at a certain time. I'd lock up the truck and take off too. We'd go to the show, or go up to the Hole in the Wall. Ma would give some of us free beer.⁵⁷

Each camp had an educational program established. There was an Education Building, camp library, and classrooms. Each camp had an Educational Adviser assigned. This person had to be a certified teacher in the state where he was employed. The Office of Education, a part of the Federal Security Agency, acted in an advisory capacity to the War Department in administering CCC camp education.⁵⁸ Their responsibility was to develop and implement an educational

and vocational training program for the camp, and work with area employers to place enrollees in jobs. Emphasis was placed on educating illiterate enrollees. Larry Ballard recalls one young man at the camp:

We had one boy, I never did know his name, who came from out of the mountains somewhere. He was very quiet and stayed to himself. He was a loner and no one knew why. We found out he couldn't read or write. Mr. Burrus [the Educational Adviser] took him under his wing, and when that boy left there, he could read and write as good as anybody. He was ashamed of his illiteracy before. When he left, Burrus said he could read and write at about the fifth grade level. Burrus would help you with⁵⁹ anything you needed. If you wanted to write a story, he could help.

Colonel Betterly had a system to identify illiterates and encourage them to get an education:

Everybody had to sign their payroll. When we made up the payroll, if a guy couldn't sign his name, the first sergeant would bring him in and say this guy can't sign his name, he has to make an X. I would say to the boy, "look son, why don't you come to school at night here and learn to write your name so you don't have to be embarrassed." That guy would show up at class, you know. The next month he would write his name. You would be surprised at how proud he would be!! Burrus had a good educational program, and it was something I was very willing to support.⁶⁰

Instructors for the academic subjects included the Educational Adviser, the Company Commander, and WPA Instructors. The vocational subjects were taught by the Forest Service, WPA Instructors, and some Army personnel.⁶¹

Another role of the educational program was to place enrollees in jobs in the local area. Colonel Betterly recalls the selection process he utilized:

When I selected men to go for an interview, I made damn sure I picked good men so that we had a good record with the industries. There was never⁶² anybody I sent in that they hired that they later had to fire.

The camp Educational Adviser also helped to plan and coordinate recreation events and athletic activities. The camp recreation hall served as the focal point for after hours activities. Available camp talent would be scouted out, and some form of entertainment would be the result. Larry Ballard was involved in the formation of a minstrel group:

We had a minstrel, which I organized myself. We found out how much talent we had in camp, and it was surprising how much we did have. Some of the boys could play guitar, banjo, and some could sing. One boy could play piano, and some could dance. We worked up a pretty good show. We must have had about 15 men. We had a couple of men who had done stage work before. We built a little stage in the recreation hall. We made a curtain out of sheets. We used to put on three or four shows a year. We had end men, the funny men. There was a straight man who would ask the questions, and the end man would come back with a silly or funny reply. This was standard for any minstrel. We wrote our own material, and we ad libbed a lot of stuff. It wasn't necessarily related to the CCC experience, but anything to make the men laugh. We had female impersonators. They put on dresses and wigs and make up. We would invite all the local people. A lot of civilians would come. We would get the word out through the local men who worked there, and the word would spread. Also, the men in camp who had local girl friends would tell them. We would have the place full of people, people we never saw or heard of before. We had duets, solos, quartets and choruses. It wasn't bad. Mr. Burrus would work with us on this. He didn't have anything to do with it other than to say, "anything you need, just let me know."

We would travel with the show too. We traveled sometimes as far as 70 miles in a night to take the show to another camp. I was master of ceremonies for the program. When you rode in the back of a truck that far, when you got there, hell, you didn't look like a master of ceremonies. There would be dust all over me from the dirt roads. When we put on a show that had civilians there, it would be a clean show, you could bring your mother or your sister if you wanted to! But when we put on a⁶³ show strictly for the boys, and sometimes we did, it wasn't so clean!

The camp also produced a country and western band of sufficient talent to be featured on a weekly radio program. Roger Bryant recalls the group:

It was composed of Charlie Thomas on the guitar, Homer Pott on the banjo, Red Dale on the mouth harp, Richard Traiter had a set of spoons he played, and Elmer Umberger played the violin. Hinkle Tomlin played the guitar. They went up to Harrisonburg on WSVB and played once a week on Saturdays. The whole band would go up there and play for about 45 minutes to an hour. We would listen to them on the radio in camp. When they came back we would tell them how⁶⁴ good they were. They played for dances too, at these country dances.

Some of the enrollees would get together and produce a camp newspaper. The length of the paper, and whether or not one was produced, would depend upon the amount of talent and interest that could be generated by the educational adviser and interested enrollees. The paper had two different names over the years. The first publication was The Spring Owl, which started in March, 1934. The

second publication was called The Sherando Windjammer. It was started in December 1938.⁶⁵ Larry Ballard was involved in the publication of The Spring Owl:

Anybody could be a writer for the paper that wanted to. We had certain ones who could write fairly well, so we considered them to be our regular writers. We put the paper out about twice a month. I had all kinds of time to work on it, being in camp anyway. When I wasn't in the canteen, and the supply job was done, I would have a lot of extra time on my hands.⁶⁶ There were other men in headquarters who weren't busy all the time.

A variety of sports were available for the enrollees to participate in. The camp fielded a baseball and basketball team. The teams joined local area independent leagues and competed very well. Camp 8 teams also competed with other CCC camp teams.⁶⁷

Other activities available to the enrollees were horseshoes, ping pong, and billiards. There was also a tennis court at the camp. One of the most popular sports was boxing. There would be matches almost every week at the recreation hall. If the camp had a "champion", he would compete with other CCC camp "champions". Roger Bryant recalls the weekly boxing matches:

We had our "happy hour" on Wednesday nights. We would have music and boxing, just things in general to entertain. We'd do this after supper and all go into the recreation building. Most of the time we'd have boxing. Mr. Burruss would challenge Lt. Gray. Of course, Lt. Gray would beat him up, would get him pretty bloody. We'd do this inside the rec hall. They'd set up the ring in there. The boys would challenge each other too. I boxed most every Wednesday night. I didn't win them all, but I won a couple. Frank Fleisher whipped me pretty good one time. He busted my nose. We were serious, we didn't let up. It was just like championship boxing.⁶⁸

WORK PROJECTS

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

The camp was located at a point near the southeastern end of the George Washington National Forest, on the Pedlar Ranger District, with timber stand improvement and forestry work in mind. The first step in this direction, and to facilitate fire control, was the construction of fire trails and forest roads to

give easy access to growing timber.⁶⁹ Larry Ballard recalls the initial work projects:

We started working near the camp, cutting down brush. The road up to the camp left much to be desired, so we worked on that too. We started working just a short distance away from camp on other roads, putting culverts in, that's where I learned to lay rock. We made new roads too. We had to cut the brush down first of course. I remember once, our boys nearly died one night with poison ivy. Three fourths of the men in the company got infected with it. We worked without shirts, and we were as brown as Indians, and the poison got all over us. I was exposed as much as anybody else, but I didn't get it. They gave them ointment, they were prepared for this type of thing. They were also prepared for snake bite, but I don't remember anyone ever getting bit. Some of the boys were in serious misery. Some men healed quickly, some took days and days.⁷⁰

Road construction and maintenance was an important part of the camp's mission and continued throughout the program. Roger Bryant recalls his first assignment in 1934:

The first thing I did was to work on the Howardsville Turnpike. We cleaned out the ditches to make it wider. The road was already there, more or less a wagon road, and we widened it. We had one old piece of a bulldozer we used and we used horses that pulled a grader along to grade it off.⁷¹

Eddie Van Fossen recalls his first field assignment in early 1934 as a Local Experienced Man:

At that time they were building the road in to Sherando Lake. We were cutting down the trees and brush so you could get in there. My job was pulling and dragging brush. That was a hard job. We used axes, brush axes and cross cut saws. I don't think that if we had modern tools like chain saws that they would have let us use them because you had to work more men, that was the idea, to work men.⁷²

As the program expanded, however, the Forest Service did acquire more road building equipment to accomplish their mission. Trail builders, power shovels, and air compressors to run jackhammers were put into use. This article appeared in the camp newspaper, The Spring Owl, in the March 26, 1934 edition:

NEW EQUIPMENT

Last week we received a new Gruenlender rock crusher, a new Isaacson Scarifier, and a Caterpillar Tractor which, we understood, was used in France during the World War. Did I say new?

This equipment will be used to build a road 16 ft. wide and hard surfaced to the North Fork Dam. We are⁷³ expecting a gasoline shovel in the near future to help with this work.

Eddie Van Fossen relates his experience learning to operate a trail builder in 1934:

Mr. Saunders, the Project Superintendent, said one day "Van, you say you like that trail builder?" Well, I had never thought about the trail builder, that's a bulldozer, you know. He said "Well, do you think you would like it?" I said "Yes sir, I think I would. Well, that was a big job, you know. There wasn't many equipment operators. He said "You go and talk to Rodney in the morning and go with him". That was Rodney Campbell, the trail builder operator. I went out with him and he taught me how to operate the trail builder. They were building the Love-Nash road at that time. The first day I went up there, he showed me how to operate the tractor and so forth. The old road had gotten wash boarded, and he was cutting these top pieces off. That's about the hardest job that you could have with a trail builder with a blade like that. Rodney showed me how. Now the equipment operator was kind of the lead man or foreman for a crew. If there was a CCC crew working there without a Forest Service foreman, then the equipment operator was in charge. Rodney said, "well, Van, I'm going to go down here and check on the boys. You just go ahead and play with it and see how you get along". So I started out and oh, I was making an awful mess. I got to where I could hold the blade fairly well. I didn't have any shirt on, bare from the waist up. I was going along and all of a sudden all hell broke loose. Why, I was sprayed all over oil, old black oil. I was just covered up. One of the hydraulic hoses broke. And of course I thought it was my fault. I stopped and I told Rodney. He came up and said "You can't help that, that wasn't any fault of yours". That was my first day on the trail builder.⁷⁴



Figure 18. Harold Cutlip operating jackhammer on the Love-Nash Road, 1934. Photo by Harold Cutlip, Pulaski, VA

A rock crusher was moved in on the North Fork of Back Creek just downstream of the site of the Back Creek Dam project. The crusher was placed at the foot of a large quartzite talus slope or rock slide to utilize this abundant resource. The crusher provided stone for the dam and all the road projects undertaken by the camp. Roger Bryant recalls working at the site:

Yes, a couple times I had to go work on the rock crusher. That was a place we hated the most. Old man Oliver from over at Massies Mill, he ran the rock crusher. It was a good operation, they crushed a lot of gravel there. We had to get up on the slide and pick the rocks and put them in the chute and roll them down the mountain.⁷⁵

James Blackwell, a CCC enrollee who was a truck driver, describes more of the operation at the rock crusher:

It was built right against the foot of the rock slide below the dam. You had to cross Back Creek to get to it. I've hauled rocks from the crusher. There was a truck down there that would dump the rock in different places as stockpiles. Then the boys would come in with Alabama banjos and load up the trucks when we came in to get a load. An Alabama banjo is a big scoop with a short handle. The boys would load up the trucks with these. It was sort of like a coal scoop,

except it was more round and had a sharp point. You could get about 3 or 4 regular shovel fulls in one. That's how we loaded the trucks. All the gravel we used on the roads we built came from there, and it was all loaded by hand. They would dump it from the crusher on the stockpile, and they would load it from there. We used a lot of gravel, and it was all done by hand.⁷⁶



Figure 19. Rock crusher on North Fork of Back Creek. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

SHERANDO LAKE FOREST CAMP AND DAM PROJECT

Later, the idea of a lake and recreational area, and the plan of a game refuge were incorporated in the work program. This idea is largely attributed to Representative A. Willis Robertson, M. C. from Lexington, Virginia, and Justus Cline, a member of the Waynesboro Game and Fish Protective Association, from Stuarts Draft, Virginia. The dam project was set up early in 1934 and the work of clearing the lake bed started in February 1934. With this work of cutting down trees was started the single largest CCC project undertaken by the Eastern Region (Region 7) of the United States Forest Service. The completion of the project involved much skilled work in concrete construction, stone masonry,

carpentry, landscaping, plumbing, painting and machine operation. The work was done largely by enrollees serving with the 351st Company, who for the most part acquired their skill in actual work on the project under the instruction of the Forest Service.⁷⁷

Following is a letter from C.M. Granger, Acting Chief of the Forest Service, to J.J. McEntee, Acting Director of Emergency Conservation Work [ECW], dated January 9, 1934:

Yesterday you referred to some correspondence with Congressman Robertson of Virginia about a lake which he desired to have built by the C.C.C. in the George Washington National Forest. I presume it is the same lake about which the Congressman has been dealing with the Forest Service for sometime.

The original proposition called for the erection of a large dam which it was estimated would cost between \$65,000 and \$75,000 -- a much more pretentious project than we have considered to come within the scope of ECW. A compromise was reached, however, for a smaller dam which we believe is satisfactory to Mr. Robertson, and he was written to that effect by the Secretary of Agriculture on January 5.⁷⁸

Eddie Van Fossen recalls early work on the dam:

They got a couple of [power] shovels in there. Roy Archer owned them, he was a contractor. They skimmed all the stumps and dirt off the lake bed. There was a good clay bottom there so they were able to get all their material right out of the area. Didn't have to haul from somewhere else. The core of the dam was supposed to be perfect clay. They cut a ditch out of the bottom where the dam would go and they put this clay in. All the top burden was put back and spread out over the lake bed after they'd taken the clay out for the dam. They'd put this clay in there, then you'd have to roll it back and forth. They'd put maybe 6 inches in there, and when you got done rolling, it would be down to an inch. A guy had a gadget that looked like a... well, it had two handles and a gauge on it. It had a scale on it. He'd push it down in there, and pull it back out to see how hard the clay was packed. You couldn't have any gravels in the clay or anything. They claimed that dam would never get wet on the back side for 500 years. The dam is built in tiers. We used a sheep foot roller to pack it. I had to pull that with the trail builder, back and forth, back and forth. That guy was there taking pictures and checking how it was packed. He was constantly taking pictures to show there was no gravel in it. He was an engineer hired by the Forest Service, he wasn't a Forest Service man. He knew all about the packing and so forth. If he didn't like it you would have to skim it off. Maybe you would gain an inch or two inches a day. If it got cold at night and would freeze, then you couldn't put any more clay on, you had to skim off

everything you did the day before and start over again. If you got today's on OK and it didn't get cold that night, then you would gain two inches. That's the way it went. One night they decided that it wouldn't freeze if they had the tractor up there scouring it up and down all the time. So they told me to go out and roll it all night to keep it beat up all the time so it wouldn't freeze. I didn't use the sheep foot roller, but just rode the tractor back and forth over it. There were a couple of boys that stayed out there running a water pump. They had a little hut built there they stayed in. I told them to wake me up if that puddle of water down there starts to freeze. I dozed off and along about 12:30, they told me the water had started to freeze. I went up and scoured the clay on the dam, and kept it up all night. The next day, Mr. Saunders came around and they went right on to work and built more on top. He said "Van, you did a mighty good job last night, you saved us an awful lot of work". At that time we had two trail builders with cleat tracks, and a sheep foot roller, and they had those two shovels hired, and 15 dump trucks. These were Forest Service. And we had a pick up. That's all the equipment we had. There wasn't a whole lot of equipment being manufactured at the time. Even if you wanted to buy it you couldn't. They had men doing stuff that you could do with equipment. Something you could do with equipment in two hours, they'd have a crew of men work all day.

Just as the dam was nearing completion in the early winter of 1934, a flash flood occurred and washed out the west side of the structure where the spillway was to be constructed. Eddie Van Fossen recalls that approximately 5,000 cubic yards of material was lost and had to be replaced. The dam was completed in early 1935.

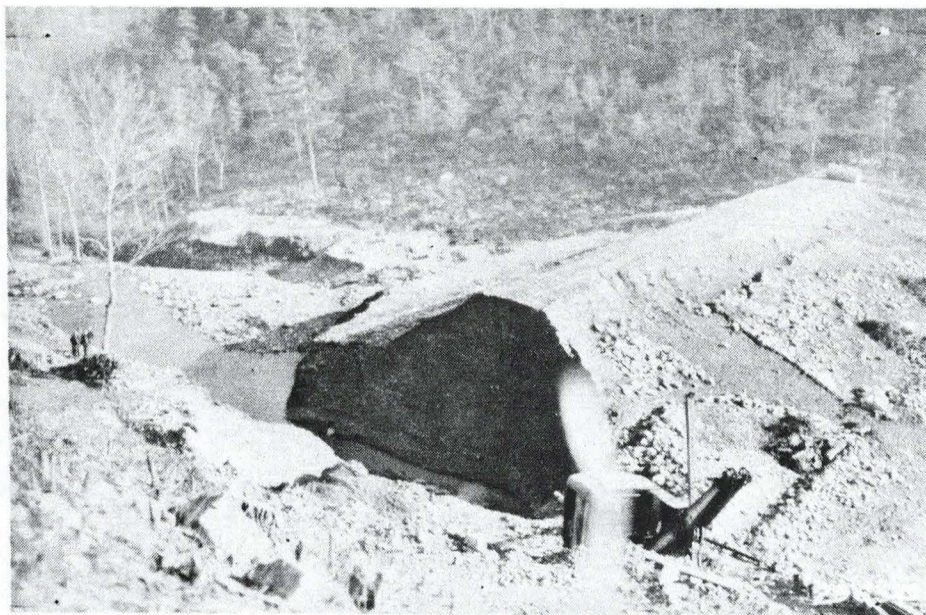


Figure 20. Aftermath of the November 1934 flood. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

Soon after the dam project started, work began near the inlet of the lake preparing the site for an administration building, bath house, parking lots, picnic areas, and a swimming beach. Final landscape plans were drawn up during the summer of 1935, and approved that fall.⁸⁰ James Blackwell recalls working in this area:

The truck I got on first was carrying brush, cleaning up the woods at the lake. Some of the boys would cut the little trees and brush. This was right as you came into the lake at the upper end, where the creek comes in. We cleaned up the side of the hill. I did that for a long time. It was an easy job. We carried the brush down to where the parking lot is in front of the administration building. Then we would burn the piles. This was just to beautify the woods. I stuck with that until I got tired of it, then I'd go with somebody else. You could ride that same truck, but work with somebody else. There were 8 or 10 different jobs to go to there. We built some of the prettiest rock walls all over that yard area you have ever seen. The walls were along the edge of the grass and the walkways to keep it from washing out. The man that was showing us how to do it, it had to be perfect, just the same as in the building. The walls we built were buried. Then I worked up on the slides above the crusher. We had to pick out face rocks and roll them down and put them on a truck and haul them up there to build these walls. We'd dig a ditch, and then lay the walls in the ditch. They said this was to prevent the ground from washing in case the lake came up and flooded. We would pour cement foundations in the ditches before we laid the rock walls. Then we buried them. They were pretty walls too. We cemented the rock in too, they weren't dry laid. We topped them off with face rocks, so the wall was faced on all three sides. We laid the walls that you can see now on the bank of the creek. But there are some of the prettiest rock walls down in the ground there that you have ever seen. You'll have a hard time finding them because they are covered up. When it was cold weather, we'd put a tent over the ditch and we'd get in under the tent to lay the rock. The rock we picked from the big slide below the dam would have to have a good face on at least two sides. We could go up the slide as far as we wanted to or needed to. We'd roll them off the mountain. We didn't want the great big ones. Sometimes they'd bust up on the way down, but you'd just go back and get another one. That's how they got the rock for the building too. There was another Forest Service man who did the tree planting. When the grounds were ready, we'd go and dig up trees to plant. We'd go up where the little dam is now. We planted all those trees around the building and the grounds. We would haul them on the truck. We'd get fairly small trees, dig them with a root ball, wrap them in burlap and wire them. There was another Forest Service man who would take that same wire we used on the root balls and make little dams across the creek. They would put rocks in the hog wire baskets. He would pick up a rock out of the creek and show us the little insects that the fish would eat. We would put the rocks in the basket and then put them in the creek to make a dam. That would make a water fall and

make a hole for the fish to live. These were in the creek above Sherando Lake.⁸¹

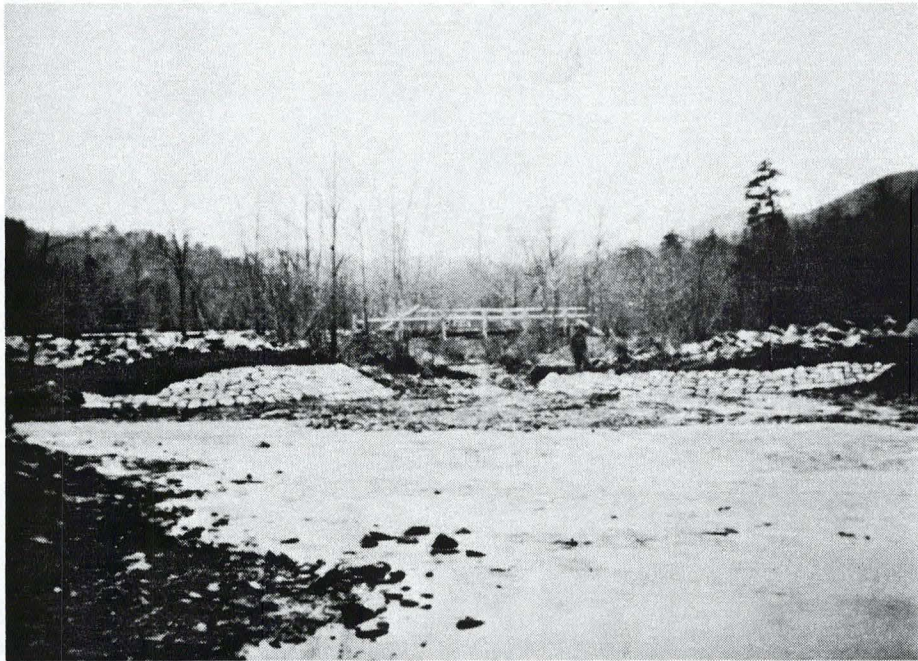


Figure 21. Laying rock retaining walls along Back Creek at Sherando Lake, 1936. (Photo by Frank Thornton, Sherando, VA)

Work on the administration building had also begun in early 1936. The foundations were dug and large quantities of rock were brought into the site from the rock slide below the dam. Construction of the building proceeded rapidly, and continued through the summer of 1936. The stone masonry and log fitting involved exacting and arduous work. Roger Bryant recalls helping with the building:

I worked out there at the lake helping roll rocks for the building. Most of the rocks came out of that slide down there. We had a sled. We would put the rocks on it and haul them up there with a small tractor. We would roll the rocks down from the slide to the bottom of the hill. Some of them were real big. From there we would put them on the sled and drag them up through the lake bottom to the building. We didn't have any way to pick the big ones up to the guy who needed them on the building. We would have to roll them up on boards, then roll them in place for him. The mason would measure them and then tell us which one to roll up to him. This was a major job and was hard work. The mason did a beautiful job though.⁸²



Figure 22. Foundations for the Administration building and bath house. Note rock placed around the foundations. (Photo by Frank Thornton, Sherando, VA)

Eddie Van Fossen recalls the local artisans who directed the work on the building:

The head carpenter was Hugh Overstreet, and he came from over near Bedford. Henry Worsham came from over near Lynchburg, he was the head stonemason. There was a Mr. Tally from Staunton, he was kind of a jackleg stonemason. Old man Worsham would stand up on the side of that building, the boys would carry the rock up to him, and he would set them. He would get a stone set, then he'd say to one of the boys "bring me that one", he would point out which one. The guy would bring it up there and it would fit. He would do that from up on the scaffold, and he was always right. I believe Hugh Overstreet did the log work. It wasn't any of the logs bought commercially and brought in there. The CCC's went out and got them [Tom Berry Allen, a former Forest Service employee, related to the author that he led a CCC crew who cut the Yellow Poplar logs for the building. He was given very exact measurements to go by, and the logs had to be carefully peeled, leaving no tool scars. He said the Poplar came from Nicholson Run, in Amherst County. He stated that Donald Fauber's crew cut the Red Oak logs for⁸³ the columns in the Big Mary's Creek area in Rockbridge County].

James Blackwell also helped with the construction of the building:

Do you know that big rock in the corner of the administration building, near the men's rest room? I helped to lay that one rock in there personally. There was a whole crew of us. [The rock is almost one cubic yard in size.] I worked on the building a good bit. There was one man that directed the work. We would pick the rock and bring them up and put them out around the building. He would tell us what to do with the stone. It had to be exactly like he said. We would pick the rock, but if it wasn't right, he would make us take it back and get another one. He would show us exactly what to do. After we got so high, we built a scaffold and rolled the rocks up if they were too heavy to lift.⁸⁴

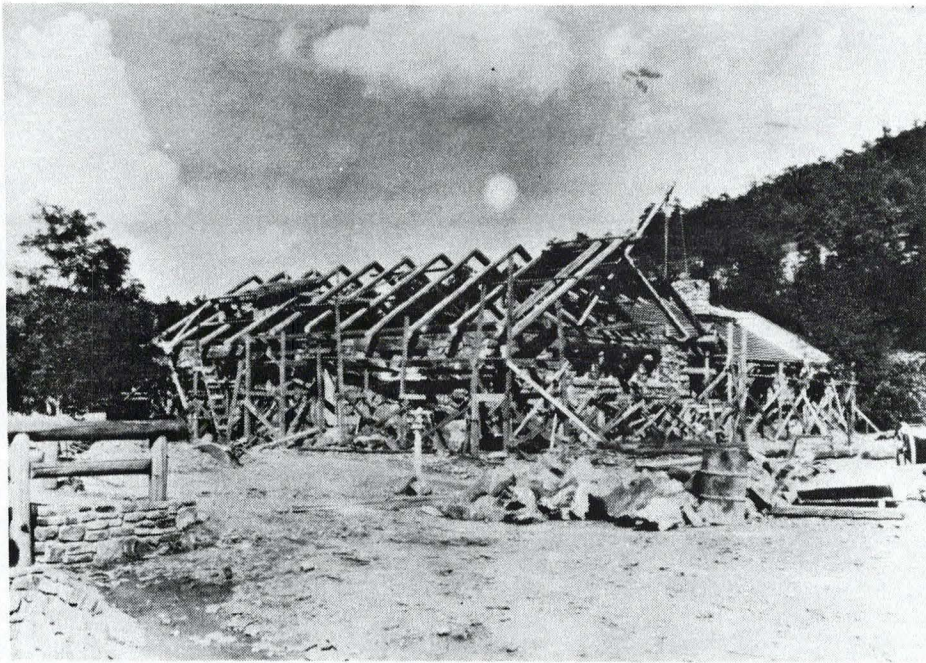


Figure 23. Administration building under construction, 1936. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

Sherando Lake opened to the public for the first time on July 4, 1936, on a limited basis. Since the administration building and bath house were not complete, the Forest Service erected two large tents just north of the boat dock

to serve as changing areas. Plans were to not open the area until all of the project was complete, however, large crowds were anticipated that weekend because President Roosevelt was dedicating the Shenandoah National Park at Big Meadows, Virginia, just to the north of Sherando. Work on the project was accelerated and extra help brought in. The following article appeared in the Waynesboro News Virginian, a local newspaper:

TRANSFER 25 CCC BOYS TO SPEED CAMP PROJECT

SHERANDO, May 28.--Twenty-five CCC boys from Camp NF-16 at Woodson, near Massie's Mill, Nelson County, were transferred to detached service at Camp A. Willis Robertson near here. The additional enrollees supplemented a crew of 142 at the local camp now at work in the Sherando Lake Forest Camp area where work is being speeded preparatory to the opening.

The total crew of 177 is in charge of C.T. Saunders, project superintendent, with M.T. Farnum, as recreational foreman. They are completing trail and picnic area work, landscaping roadsides, erecting traffic directional signs⁸⁵ and making improvements to the beach of the lake in the bathing area.

From all accounts, Sherando Lake Recreation Area was a huge success from the very beginning. Following is an excerpt from an editorial that appeared in the Waynesboro News Virginian on Thursday, July 9, 1936.

SHERANDO LAKE

Perhaps all the superlatives available have already been employed in describing the attraction of Sherando Lake Forest Camp but it is impossible to avoid reference this week to this lovely recreational center located in George Washington National Forest within 15 miles of Waynesboro, that is now open to the public short periods daily.

The area is being developed by the United States Forestry Service, using CCC lads largely in the actual work. It is NOT a park in the true sense of the word; it is distinctly a camping site, playground, swimming resort, boating area, and fishing center. It is provided as a retreat where one can really enjoy the natural beauties of virgin Virginia forests.

There is no charge for anything. It is distinctly a pleasure spot for the average man. There are no⁸⁶ special privileges for anyone. All are invited and all are welcome.

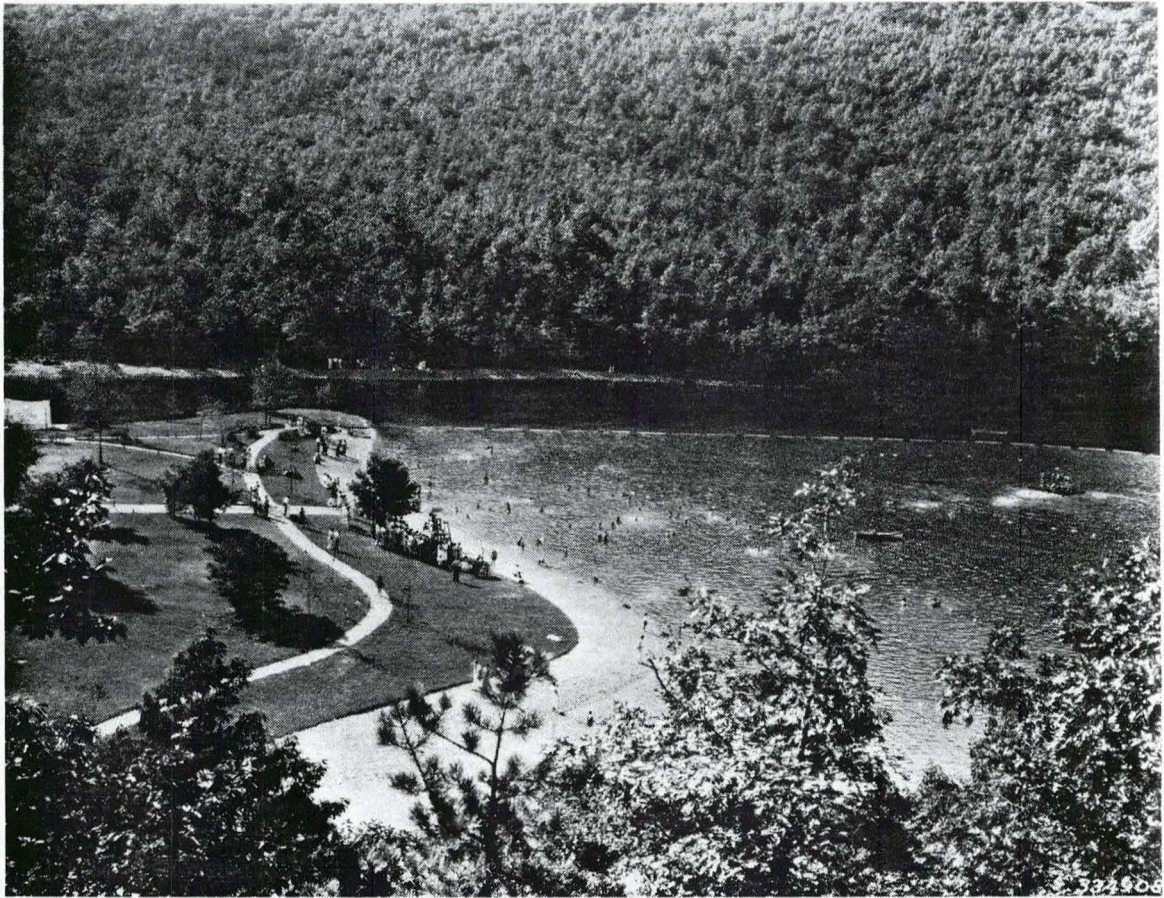


Figure 24. People enjoying Sherando Lake beach area in the summer of 1936. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

The first area administrator at Sherando Lake was M.T. Farnum. He was a Forest Service employee and was responsible for the upkeep and management of the area. Of course, Camp NF-8 provided all the necessary labor to do this job. Roger Bryant remembers some of their duties:

They kept the grounds up. There was always a crew for that. Picking up trash. It was spotless. They'd see a cigarette laying on the ground they'd pick it up and get rid of it.

Work continued in the recreation area in the fall and winter of 1936-1937. Clark Jordan, a CCC enrollee, was assigned to stay overnight at the facility throughout the winter months. After the work crews left for the day, he would patrol the area to be sure warming fires were out, and that everything was in order. He would then spend the night in the quarters at the administration building. During the days, he would be sent back to camp to rest.⁸⁸

Eddie Van Fossen recalls Mr. Farnum and some of his duties:

He was the recreation man. On the Sherando Lake entrance road, the last hill before you get in the area there is a big steep bank on the left side. They had an awful time getting anything to grow on that bank because it was so steep. They put log walls in there, and rocks. They tried everything. I think they finally got something growing. That was his job. He was the expert, he could tell the people about the plants and what have you. He worked for the Forest Service, but not for the ranger district, his boss was in Harrisonburg. Farnum had an office⁸⁹ there in the administration building and that was his quarters too.

The CCC also provided lifeguards for the beach area. Those enrollees volunteering for lifeguard duty were first trained at nearby Shenandoah Acres Resort in 1935, to be prepared for the 1936 season.



Figure 25. Part of the first lifeguard crew at Sherando Lake in 1936. (Photo by Ed Clements, Stuarts Draft, VA)

BIG LEVELS GAME REFUGE

Work in the Big Levels Game Refuge was another major responsibility of Camp NF-8. Sherando Lake and the camp itself were located on the edge of the refuge. The area was declared a Federal Game Refuge by Presidential Proclamation #2128 on July 6, 1935. The Federal Government became owner of the fish and game within the area of 32,000 acres. All hunting, fishing and trapping within the area was declared unlawful except that authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture.⁹⁰

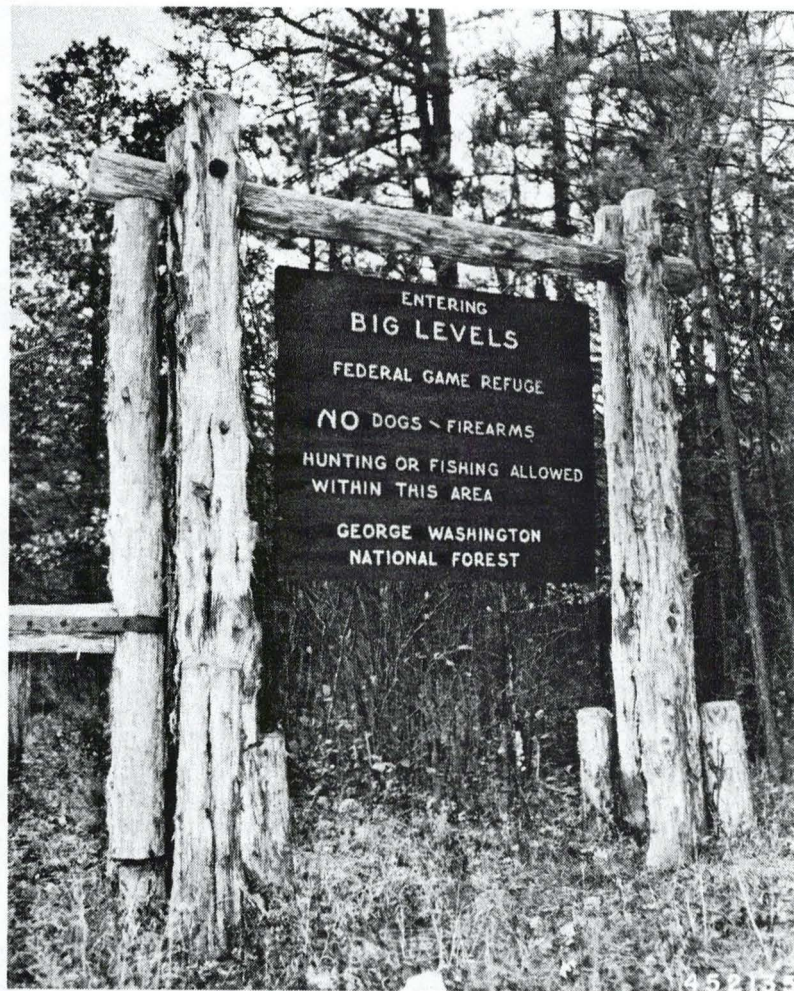


Figure 26. Entrance sign to the Big Levels Game Refuge, 1936. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

The refuge provided a variety of work for the enrollees . One of the jobs was to stretch a single strand of wire around the entire perimeter of the area, approximately 40 miles, and post Federal Game Refuge Boundary signs along the boundary. After this task was completed, the boundary was then patrolled and maintained. The following excerpt is from a letter to Forest Supervisor Borden from Regional Forester R.M. Evans, dated July 17, 1935:

You will be very glad to learn that on July 6 President Roosevelt issued a Proclamation creating the Big Levels Federal Game Refuge. You will wish to write to the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and to the Fish and Game Protective Association, who are interested in this matter, to notify them of the action taken.

It will be necessary to properly post the Federal Game Refuge area before enforcing the stopping of hunting and fishing, and I hope it will be possible for you to start this job very soon. We will wish a single wire surrounding the exterior boundary of the Government land in the Refuge and suitable signs posted so that they will at all time be in easy sight of each other. A metal sign (Form 275-c) will be suitable for posting this area. Possibly clearing of a line 10' - 20' wide along the boundary, where sufficiently permanent, may be decidedly⁹¹ worth while and will permit a clearer view of posted signs.

Roger Bryant recalls some of that work:

We cut the trail around that boundary line and then we strung that wire. There were a good many that worked on that project. That was a big operation. We would use a wire stretcher, you know one of these barbwire stretchers. We cut the underbrush out before we brought the wire through. We nailed the wire to the trees. [Many of the places where the boundary went were rugged, steep and remote]. Some of them places they had to take a rope and pull you up through. One would go ahead and climb it, then throw you a rope down to pull you and the wire up through. Up around Saint Mary's there are some places up there where you can't hardly get through it.⁹² We did take a mattock and cut steps in the steeper parts sometimes.

The Big Levels Game Refuge achieved national attention as a model for the entire country. Following is an article that appeared in the Waynesboro News Virginian on August 15, 1938:

SILCOX, FOREST SERVICE CHIEF,
LAUDS BIG LEVELS PROJECT

"I think the Big Levels project is one of the most significant ventures we have made in game management," F.A. Silcox, chief of the Forest Service, U.S.D.A., recently wrote J.N. "Ding" Darling, famous cartoonist and wildlife conservationist, now serving as president of the National Wildlife Federation.

A copy of the letter has been received by Justus H. Cline, of Stuarts Draft, "father" of the nearby federal game refuge.

Carl D. Shoemaker, of Washington, secretary-manager of the federation, of which Mr. Cline is director at large, and other well-known conservationists recently visited the Big Levels area, and Mr. Shoemaker later said the project "is the answer to our wildlife restoration program."

On the basis of a report given by Mr. Shoemaker, the federation president, Mr. Darling, wrote Mr. Cline that the Big Levels project stands as "a monument of efficiency and the way to do the work on wider areas under the Forestry Service."

Mr. Darling also wrote the Chief Forester as follows:

"One of my scouts has just been looking over the Big Levels forestry project in Virginia, and his enthusiasm over the forestry management of wildlife is so full of boundless praise that I just had to pass on the word to you in order that you may be encouraged to amplify the wildlife management on all forest areas.

"In the judgement of this group of fellows who went down over the Big Levels project, the results of the wildlife management there are the best example in the country."

Mr. Silcox answered, in part:

"I think the Big Levels project is one the most significant ventures we have made in game management. The responsibility has been fixed on one agency with the consent of the State itself. I think if we handle the situation successfully, we can extend this system more and more, in the hope of doing a real job."

Mr. Silcox pointed out "the Forest Service has complete control of this area, and for three years has concentrated on it as a proving ground to test out theories of wildlife management. It is stocked with deer, with undesirable species under control. The area is patrolled and is excepted from the regular cooperative agreement which has been signed for other National Forest areas in Virginia." ⁹⁵

In order to control undesirable species and patrol the area, the Forest Service set up patrol cabins in the refuge and selected CCC enrollees to live in them and do certain wildlife management work. Garland Priddy was one of those selected. He spent approximately two years doing this work, longer than anyone else at the camp. Following are some of his recollections about the work:

The first work day I was in camp, we were loaded on a truck, and went up to where they were building Sherando Lake. They just had started on the spillway up there. They were digging holes down between the

mountain for the foundations. I got off that truck and they handed me a wheelbarrow and I had to shove the loaded wheelbarrow up that hill. I didn't weigh but about 122 pounds, and was 17 years old then. I had to push the wheelbarrow full of rocks up the hill. There were two boys down there loading it, and me shoving it up the hill by myself, I was losing my balance one way, and then another. The wheelbarrow would about get away from me. Well, I stayed with it that day. That night, when I was back at the barracks, I got up and walked around the camp to the recreation hall. I came up to the recreation hall just about a quarter to nine. There was a squad leader there. He said, "you know, they're signing up game patrolmen for the Game Refuge, somebody told me in the rec hall." I said, "I think I'll go up there and apply for that job. That sounds better than what I've been doing." I had only been one day on the wheelbarrow. He said, "rookie, you ain't going to get that job. That place was filled up with people applying for that job." But I went up there, and there was nobody in front of me. The lights in the camp go out at nine o'clock, so I just barely got there before he closed. This was at the Forest Service office. There was a Forest Service man there and he asked me, "what do you know about game and the game refuge and that kind of stuff?" I first told him I didn't know anything about it, but yeah I do to, because I've been hunting since I was 10 years old. My daddy has 14 dogs at home and hunts them. We looked after dogs and trained them." He said, "no wonder you're in the CCC, to take care of them damn dogs!" He asked me if I was any kin to Landrum Priddy. I said, "yeah, that's my great uncle." He said, "I used to be around Meherrin, Virginia. That's where I met your great uncle." I went out the next morning to get in the truck, and had got in and was ready to go back to the dam to work. They called out two names, my name and another one. We were picked for the patrolman jobs. Lansbury was the other one. They called us off the trucks. They told us what we would be doing. They had already put these cabins out, one at Laurel Run, and one at Johns Run.

It was lonesome out there, just looking at one another. We started the trapping program at Laurel Run. Mr. Holbert, he had traps set up, but they hadn't given us any traps in the winter, January of '35. Mr. Holbert told me, after that snow storm, one day, "how about going with me to help me with my traps. I haven't been to them in two days and they have done got snowed under." So we went walking all the way up that mountain, couldn't get up there with a car, about 5 miles up and 5 miles down. I went down to Holberts and started out from his place. It was just a trail up the mountain. I wore old galoshes they furnished us at the camp. There was a crust on the snow and I had to pick my foot all the way up and put it all the way down to break through. I come very near leaving this world that day. When we got back, I left Holberts house and still had two miles and some to go. I finally just felt like I was so weak, and felt like I was burning up. I laid down in that snow and it felt so good. I laid there in that snow, and I said, "if I lay here any more I'm going to die right here." So I got up and finally managed to get back to the cabin. It was way after dark then. It was dark when we started that morning. I had got so that I could hardly put one foot in front of the other. I got into the cabin and was OK, but that's the nearest I have ever come

to dying of exposure. If I had stayed there in the snow, my buddy wouldn't have known where to come and look for me, I don't reckon.

After we moved to Johns Run, we were running our own trap line. The government wanted to find out what the predators of the game were eating. They claimed the foxes were eating bird eggs and turkey eggs and different things. Foxes would kill the birds. We heard that they wanted to know in Washington what the predators were feeding on. So we would catch them. They would give us the hides, but we would cut them open and skin them and put the stomachs in formaldehyde. The Forest Service man would come around every now and then and take them with him. We put the stomachs in a gallon container. We would close down the trap line in hot weather, because the hides would be no good then. They let us sell the hides. We made good money on them. One time we caught 5 foxes in one morning, one of them was a red fox, which was more rare than the gray fox. We put the hides on a stretcher, outside the cabin, and then, when we would get so many, we'd take them over to Staunton to a fur dealer and sell them. We even found out that if we took the whole animal over there, he would do the skinning and give us the stomach. An old skunk brought more than a fox, you wouldn't believe that would you? A number one skunk, one with a whole lot of white down his back, he would be worth about a quarter. The ones with just a white spot on the top of his head, that skunk would be worth about two dollars and a half.

We would boil the traps and put them in grease, and handle them with gloves so there wouldn't be a human smell on them. We would go down the Coal Road and set them. A trick we learned - when a fox had been coming off the mountain every day, he would leave a little trail. When he hit a sandy spot, I would put just one trap there, cover it up with sand, and then put a stick or something right in front of it. A fox won't step on a stick, he'll jump over the stick and jump right on the trap. We would get pork cracklings and break them up for bait. We'd go down to my wife's daddy, Mr. Patterson, to get the bait. He's the one who showed us a lot about trapping too.

In the cabin where we lived at Johns Run, we just had a wood cook stove. When we would go to bed at night, we would burn dead chestnut wood, and that would burn out. We wouldn't have heat until we started a fire the next morning. We'd have bacon and eggs for breakfast, things like that. We didn't have any coolers. The weather would keep our things cool in season. The bacon would mold on us if we didn't watch. Then we had a lot of canned stuff. They would take us about once a month to the camp, allowed us 52 cents a day apiece, that's a dollar and four cents. We bought it out of the store house at camp, and they charged us for everything we got against our allowance. Back in those days eggs were about 12 cents a dozen, bacon was about 15 cents a pound. We would come back with a truck load. We would get a half crate of eggs each time, about 6 dozen or so. We had to make our bread. We cooked our own biscuits. We had a little oven on the stove. We would make some good bread, and we'd make coffee. We'd open a can of pork and beans for lunch, can of peaches, we used to use the creek for a cooler. I'll never forget, the government furnished us with enamel pots. They didn't have any small cans of food over at

camp, they just had gallon cans. So when we wanted peaches, we had to open a gallon can. We would put them in one of those enamel pans and put it in the creek to let that cold water cool them off and keep them for another meal. Someone came by the cabin one time when we were gone and stole the peaches and the kettle too. There was a CCC boy named Mathews who stayed with me for a while. We went up to the camp one day and we got some ripe tomatoes. So we brought us back some to the cabin. I went in and ate one and he came in and got so mad he took the rest of them and threw them out through the woods. He got mad because I ate one when he wasn't there. I couldn't get along with him. I went and bought a radio. It was a battery radio. We got up in the tree and cut the top of the tree out and put an antennae up. I would want to play the radio, I like country music, and he liked some kind of classical music. So finally, I'd play the radio all day, my day, and he would play it all day the next day. It was my radio, but it was the only way I could get along with him. He'd cook one day, and I'd cook the next. We couldn't cooperate a bit. The only time when I got somebody there that I could live with and get along with was when Rose Wiseman come up there. We got together and we had a good time, we never did fuss or fight over nothing. We would patrol 6 days and take a day off. We weren't supposed to have an automobile, but I bought an old Model A Ford. We'd go to Waynesboro on Saturday and go to the movies. We'd take the money we'd get out of hides. That helped us a whole lot. We'd get about \$15.00 or so a month from the hides. My daddy, after he got back to working on the railroad, he sent my money back to me. That's how I got to buy a car.

Justus Cline would come to the refuge a lot. He never took his car out of low. I could hear him coming from a mile away. He would run over them rocks, and never go over 3 or 4 miles per hour. When they cut that trail around the Refuge, they cut a boundary line all the way around it and put up one wire. While they were cutting the boundary line, they got into a turkey nest with eggs. So Justus gets these eggs and takes them somewhere and puts them under a hen and hatches them out. It was about ten of them I believe, wild turkeys. He brought them up there for us to look after. He would call up every day on the phone, you see, he had a Forest Service phone too, and say, "how's the turkeys." And I'd say, "doing real good." One day he called and asked about them, and I said, "they're all dead!" We didn't have the right kind of cage and they got sick and died. Just any day you could see Mr. Cline traveling around through that Coal Road. He'd be by himself most of the time. Once in a while, he'd have some Forest Service man with him, or somebody he wanted to show something to. He even brought a bear out there. It was a great big old bear. I remember I was working under my car and that bear stuck his head under the car. He hung around the cabin area for about a week or two, and finally he went down out of the Refuge and somebody down there killed him. They caught the man who killed him. I think he got fined. There was quite a stink about the man shooting him.

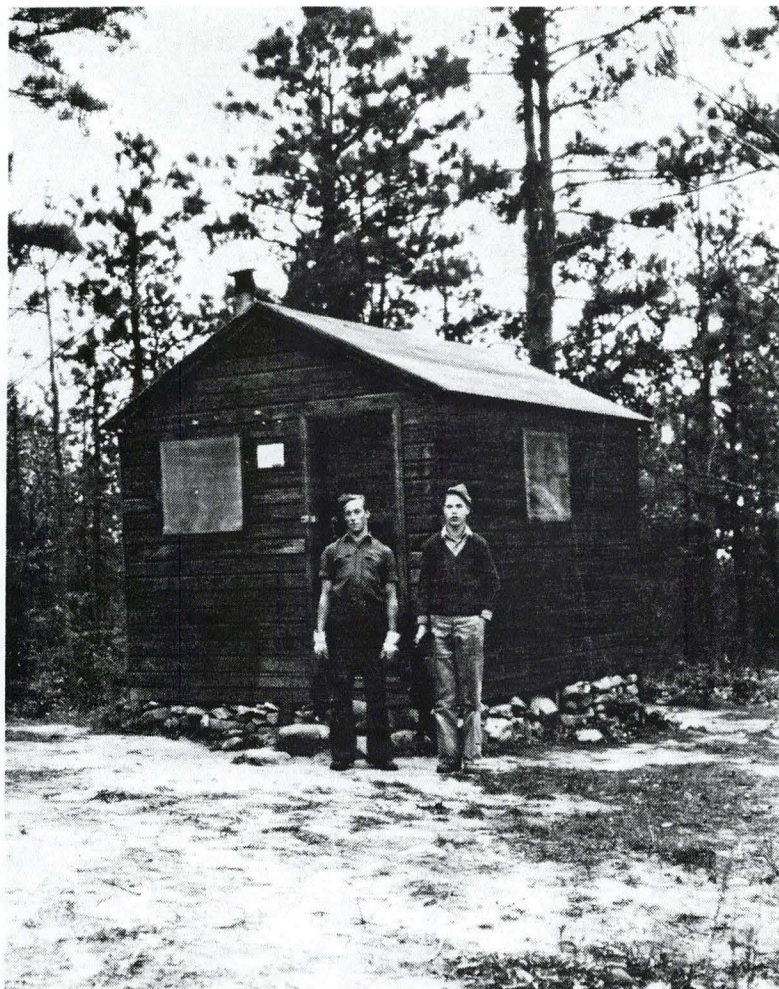


Figure 27. Hugo Wiseman (left) and Garland Priddy, Game Patrolmen on the Big Levels Game Refuge, 1937. They are standing in front of their cabin at Johns Run. Each one is holding a skunk by the tail. (U.S. Forest Service Photo)

FIREFIGHTING

Firefighting was an important role undertaken by the CCC. Almost all enrollees received fire suppression training from the Forest Service. Special crews were set up and a call out order scheduled. When conditions warranted, liberty privileges would be curtailed to keep men in the camp for fire standby. James Blackwell, a truck driver for a fire crew, had the following comments:

During fire season, I was a fire truck driver. We had four fire crews. If there was a fire call, we were the first ones to go. They

had these big stake body trucks, that we would haul the firefighters in. They would bring the tools on a separate truck. There was a number 1 crew, number 2, 3 and so on. The number 1 crew was the first to go out. They were the best. I drove the number one crew. They would put the best and most experienced workers on this crew. If number one went out on a fire, they wouldn't send number two, they were the next best. They would send one and three, and leave two and four in reserve in case of another fire. If there was a fire, they would ring a bell and the number one crew would go out.

Another thing I would do on the weekends was to ride up and down the road from Sherando to Love in my truck, old 23, during the fire season. I'd have somebody with me. We were just checking for fires. If you worked a day on the weekend, you'd get a day off. I'd save my days, and that's when I'd come home.⁹⁵

Eddie Van Fossen recalls how the fire organization was managed:

The district ranger had charge of the firefighting outfit. The CCC camp had their foremen and crews available to go out and fight fires and all, but if it was a big fire, the ranger would be there directing. As well as I remember, most fires we had, the camp just went out and took care of them. They didn't send somebody else to check on it unless it was an awful big fire. I used to run the fire pump. They'd designate me as water boss. I'd get the pump going, and they'd lay out the hose. Once in a while I'd walk up the hose line to see if everything was all right or not.⁹⁶

Roger Bryant recalls his experience on fire duty:

We would get liberty on weekends unless it was fire season. Most everybody had to stay in then during fire season. Just a few got liberty at that time. I remember one time they came down to Waynesboro, we were all out on liberty, except the ones definitely had to stay in during fire season. They came to the Cavalier Theater and had the manager cut the lights on in the theater. It was an Army man from camp. He said he wanted all the CCC boys outside. We had to go fight fire then. Being a cook, I had to go to camp and fix up food to take. We always took food out there, we'd take it out on a truck, food like sandwiches, drinks, cold water, plenty of it. I remember a fire we went to on Big Priest Mountain. It was rough getting to it. We found a still while we were up there, that's what caught it afire. One guy had drank some of that mash and he couldn't even get out of the way of the fire. He was laying beside a rock and they had the leaves raked away from him so he wouldn't burn. We found the mash barrels. They were buried in the ground. That was a big fire.⁹⁷

LASTING EFFECTS OF THE CCC PROGRAM

Much of the developed recreation and transportation infrastructure of the George Washington National Forest was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Facilities such as Sherando Lake Recreation Area, The Appalachian Trail and other hiking trails are more in demand now than ever before. All of these facilities were well designed and built to high standards. Most of the CCC era buildings on the forest qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.⁹⁸ These buildings represent a style of architecture and quality of workmanship that could not reasonably be reproduced today.

THE END OF THE CCC PROGRAM

There is no question that the CCC was a successful program. The objectives set forth by President Roosevelt in 1933 had been met or exceeded. As successful and popular as the program was, however, it did not survive. There were many factors that contributed to its demise; an improving economy, political philosophy, and most importantly, World War II. Following are excerpts from an article that appeared in American Visions, in 1986 which talks about the decline of the program:

Prompted by the overwhelming success of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Roosevelt introduced legislation in 1937 to make the CCC a permanent, independent agency. He expected little opposition to the bill.

Surprisingly, the measure failed. Many members of Congress could not see beyond the "work-relief" aspect of the CCC. They argued that making the program permanent would be an open acknowledgement of America's failure to create real jobs for its youth. So despite the corps' vast popularity, Congress rejected Roosevelt's proposal and agreed only to extend the program for another three years.

CCC administrators had difficulty determining the exact cause of the corps' decline in the late thirties, but they considered the economic recovery, spurred by the defense industry, to be a major factor. As more jobs became available, the CCC's \$30⁹⁹ monthly allotment began to pale in comparison with industrial wages.

Camp NF-8 was closed on July 18, 1941.¹⁰⁰ Colonel Betterly was assigned to District 4 Headquarters in Richmond, Virginia at the time and was responsible for closing out the camps in Virginia, including Camp NF-8:

By this time, the war in Europe was underway, we were not in the war, but we were gearing up for it and the CCC's were gradually being closed down. The economy was improving also and the draft was in so we were getting fewer enrollees. We would get orders from Baltimore to close a certain camp. I was in the headquarters as executive officer then. We would have to give that camp transportation orders for those men to go back to their homes. Some may have just arrived, and some of them may have been there for years. They wouldn't have a choice to transfer or finish out their enlistment or anything, they would be transferred to where they were enrolled. You would have to give them transportation orders to go by train to these places. The company officer would be responsible for writing out their orders and sending them home. The district quartermaster would be responsible for giving the company commander the orders as to where he was to send the property, such as the beds, bedding, blankets, all the quartermaster stuff. In our case, all of it was sent to New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, which was a big quartermaster setup. The buildings, up to the time I left, were not being demolished. As you say, they were to be used for other purposes. All the movable stuff was sent to New Cumberland. That was along about June or July of 1941, preceding Pearl Harbor. When it got along about November, things were about all wound up with the CCC's, no more camps in our Corps, we had closed the last one. The close out of the 3rd Corps CCC was fast, hectic, and rapid.¹⁰¹

THE CCC EXPERIENCE

Another measure of the success of the CCC are the testimonials given by those men who participated in it. Of course, there were negative aspects about the program also. The national desertation rate was approximately 18 percent, indicating some dissatisfaction with the program.¹⁰² The majority of enrollees, however, recall a positive experience. Many look upon their time in the CCC as the event most responsible for shaping their lives in a positive way.

Following is a sampling of the kind of testimonial that one hears from those who were associated with the CCC:

Colonel John Betterly:

I loved it! They were my boys! I had always had the feeling that you could maintain discipline and have a friendly relationship with your men. I got so that I could call every man in the company by name. Every man in the company felt free to come up to my desk and ask me anything. They were not afraid of me, at least I don't think they were. I was stern, but I was fair. I think it was one of the finest programs for young people this country has ever developed. Basically it was not a welfare program. Sure, it developed during a time when

the depression was on and the economy was down, but those boys worked. There was no hand out about it. They earned every cent they got. The result was that they developed a feeling of personal pride and respect for themselves that a charitable handout would not have had. They knew they were earning what they got, and they were proud of it. They were proud of the work they were doing. They could see what it was, see what its value was. They came out of it with an education, they could earn a living when the economy picked up. They came out of it as men with a feeling of self pride that the men who were on the WPA projects didn't seem to have. I think it was a wonderful organization myself. I'm awful sorry that it hasn't been continued. ¹⁰³

Roger Bryant:

Being up there was the real start of my life. I could have stayed in the coal mines, and had black lung, but I preferred to go in the CC camp. It was a great life. Course, I've done a lot of things in my life that I was ashamed of, but after all, I think I turned out real good. It made a man out of me. I knew how to take orders. I knew how to treat other people. ¹⁰⁴

Garland Priddy:

Most of the boys in the CCC's were under the Army influence. Except for being armed, they had about the same thing as the regular Army would have. If it hadn't been for the CC's that Roosevelt put out, we wouldn't have done so well in World War II. They were 85 percent ready when the war started. Most of them were in the right age to go. Most of them boys had all the training except arms, so they knew army life. I often think about it now. I don't think they could find boys now like they were then. I don't think you could get them to go out and do things the boys did then. Unless they got hungry, if they got real hungry they would work. Times have changed one heck of a lot. ¹⁰⁵

Larry Ballard:

I think about it quite often. I enjoy outdoor life. I was at a very impressionable age. I met a lot of people that I liked and they seemed to like me. I didn't have to worry about tomorrow. I enjoyed that kind of life. I enjoyed the rural setting, the open spaces. I loved the trees and animals. I always enjoy going back to visit, or just to go up to the lake and reminisce. ¹⁰⁶

CAMP NF-8 AS A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR FACILITY

On September 16, 1940, the 76th Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act. This law was more commonly referred to as the "Draft". One of the provisions of the act was to provide "any person claiming exemption from combatant training and service because of conscientious objections whose claim is sustained by the local [Selective Service] board shall, if he is inducted into the land or navel forces, be assigned to noncombatant service as defined by the President, or, if he is found to be conscientiously opposed to participation in such noncombatant service, in lieu of such induction, be assigned to work of national importance under civilian direction." A subsequent Executive Order designated the Director of the Selective Service to establish and determine this work of national importance. The Selective Service System then established camps on Federal lands for the accomplishment of projects similar in nature to those undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps.¹⁰⁷ The organization to which the objectors were assigned was called the Civilian Public Service (CPS).

This latter group of conscientious objectors or "Conchies" as they were called, retained their status as civilians and did not at any time come under the control of the armed forces. They were not eligible for, nor did they receive, any benefits provided for the men in the armed service, such as pay, dependency allowances, insurance, compensation, job preference or re-employment rights. When they were assigned to the CPS, it was for the duration of the war.¹⁰⁸

The CPS, for the most part, utilized abandoned CCC camps on Federal lands. The camps were managed and financed by various religious groups, and in some cases the assignees had to pay for their own food. The Mennonites, Brethren, and Quakers, known as the "historical Peace Churches" were the largest supporters of the CPS camps. In all, 63 different religious denominations and sects were represented, including a handful of men of no religious faith.¹⁰⁹

The number of conscientious objectors who were assigned to work of national importance under civilian direction was decidedly limited. At the height of the program in 1943, there were 6,758 men in the CPS, 62 per cent of whom were engaged in projects other than the protection and maintenance of Federal lands.¹¹⁰ Although a tiny minority, the conscientious objectors generated a

good deal of controversy. The pacifist mood of the country had changed to one of war fever. Articles appeared in prominent national newspapers labeling the men as shirkers and draft evaders. Just as many articles appeared in defense of their dignity as citizens and of their right to object to war. Large numbers of objectors were anticipated when the Selective Service Act was passed in 1940, but they did not materialize. Conscientious objectors who had a "change of heart" were usually those who came into the CPS during peacetime and whose opinions were changed by Pearl Harbor.¹¹¹

Camp NF-8 was approved for a CPS facility on April 2, 1942, and was occupied by 60 men on May 15, 1942. Camp strength was eventually built to 150 men. The camp was designated as CPS Camp 29, and was administered by the Brethren Service Committee. Their major work involved completion of the landscaping on the northern section of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Technical supervision was provided by the Park Service for these projects. Tools, equipment and trucks were supplied from surpluses of CCC equipment. A small group of men from Camp 29 were assigned to maintain Sherando Lake Recreation Area and the Big Levels Game Refuge, under the supervision of Donald Fauber, Forest Service Game Manager. Another responsibility the camp had was fighting forest fires.

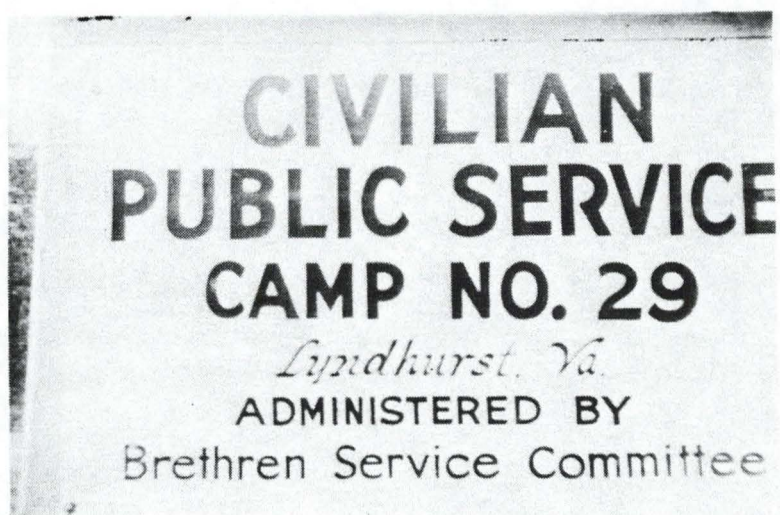


Figure 28. Entrance sign for CPS Camp 29. Photo by Mark E. Wolfe, Sherando, VA.

Reverend Mark E. Wolfe, a member of the Brethren Church from Pennsylvania Dutch Country, was assigned to the camp in October, 1942. Reverend Wolfe recalls some of the work they engaged in:

The Parkway had been constructed and everything was roughly done. We were doing the finishing of things. We smoothed off the banks and sowed grass seed so it wouldn't wash. We gathered rocks and hauled them out to the rock fences. There were some men who had experience in building dry walls. I worked some on that, not a great deal. They cut trees down off the parkway on the side of the mountain. The trees that were sizeable enough for wood we carried out and piled at the side of the parkway to be hauled away. I'm not sure what they did with the wood. I helped quite a lot with that. When we worked on that, they didn't push us because coming up and down the steep grades and carrying on your shoulder the pieces of wood was pretty hard. We kept at it, and if we were seen standing around a little bit too long, we were reminded. You were expected to keep at your job. I found soon after I was there that every man had a record kept on him. If you were not a faithful worker, if you were not honest in doing an honest days work, a record was kept of it. The record was kept, as far as I know, by the Park Service man. The director pretty well knew what was going on from the Park Service. In other words, if a man didn't measure up, the director was the go between. He would mediate problems.¹¹²



Figure 29. Men from Camp 29 bucking logs on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Photo by Mark E. Wolfe, Sherando, VA.

The CPS men came from all over the country and from all sorts of backgrounds. Their ages ranged from 19-20 up to the mid forties. Reverend Wolfe relates some of the differences in people he encountered:

World War II took fellows out of their setting where they grew up and took them out somewhere else. For myself, I grew up in Pennsylvania Dutch country. We had fellows in camp from all over, down south in the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Indiana. You would have these various dialects and expressions that would get conglomerated together. You would hear things said that were completely foreign to you. You would hear a Carolinian or Alabamian come around talking to somebody, talking about his girlfriend. He would say, "I carried her home." To us from the north that meant that you literally carried her in your arms. We had a big time about that, we would comment about how large a girl she might have been that he carried her home.

We had men there who had wonderful skills. It was a combination of men that came from all walks of life, some who were just brought off the farm and others out from the mills and offices, and out from the higher echelons of life, and some who had developed skills that others didn't have. I remember some fellows who were sent out to the project with us, who never had hold of a shovel handle or any tools to work with, or an ax to cut anything. It was pitiful to see them try to do something with a tool. The ages varied from 19 or 20 up through the 40's and 50's. We had some there, if they had not registered as conscientious objectors, they would never have been taken into the Army. But because they were conscientious objectors, they sent them here. Their age and their health was not the best, they would have been turned down.

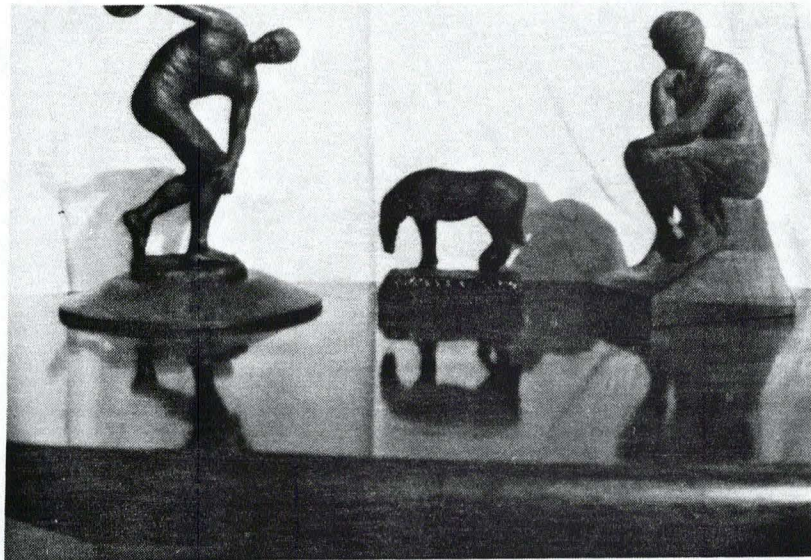


Figure 30. Wood carvings done by CPS men at Camp 29 in their spare time. Photo by Mark E. Wolfe, Sherando, VA.

Men were transferred in and out of camp frequently. There were opportunities for the men to volunteer for various special projects, either temporary or permanent, in other parts of the country. The Forest Service organized a camp in 1943 at Missoula, Montana to train and use a selected group of assignees as parachute fire fighters [smoke jumpers] for control of fires in remote and inaccessible western forests.¹¹⁴ Reverend Wolfe remembers these calls for volunteers:

There were transfers quite often. Sometimes the call came for a certain amount of men to go somewhere for a certain project in another state perhaps. If they couldn't get volunteers, then the Director had to come to us and say we need you to go to such and such a place. Sometimes the duty was temporary and sometimes it was uncertain when the job would be over. The smoke jumping project, generally fellows volunteered for that. It was an adventure you know. Out in the west there where they have those bad forest fires sometimes. I know one fellow that went and he had quite an experience. He went out there and stayed until he was discharged.¹¹⁵

A group of CPS volunteers were used as "guinea pigs" on various medical research projects under the supervision of the Office of Scientific Research and Development and the Surgeon General of the Army. They assisted with experiments having to do with problems of diet, nutrition, climate, altitude, and certain diseases. Besides acting as subjects for tests, they also assisted with the laboratory work. This work was considered quite important and received a high priority among the CPS projects. Selection of volunteers for this work was based upon the assignee's physical condition and temperament.¹¹⁶

Soon after the CPS was formed, it was tapped as a source of labor for agriculture. Augusta County, where Camp 29 was located, was the largest food producing county in the state during World War II.¹¹⁷ In the fall of 1943, the the men of Camp 29 harvested a large part of the apple crop in Augusta and surrounding counties. When area farmers learned the camp was being moved in early 1944, they lobbied the Virginia Congressional delegation and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to keep the camp in Lyndhurst.

The decision to move Camp 29 was made in late 1943. The landscaping work on the north end of the Parkway was winding down. The Blue Ridge Parkway had acquired a large tract of land around Peaks of Otter, near Bedford, Virginia that needed work. The Park Service considered the Bedford location to be more centrally

located for future project work and fire protection. The camp moved out on February 1, 1944. There were many who were sorry to see it go. The camp had existed for 21 months and had housed over 300 conscientious objectors.

The Park Service had nothing but high praise for the work the CPS accomplished, not only in Virginia, but around the country. Several National Park Superintendents stated the CPS was more productive than the CCC had been on their units. They stated that the CPS men were generally more skilled in specialized areas, were better educated and more mature than the average CCC boy. The Park Service used CPS men in many cases to do the work of employees that had been drafted during the war.¹¹⁸

CPS Camp 29 produced a newspaper called "Our Story". The first issue published at the new Bedford camp contained an article entitled "Valedictum to Lyndhurst". Following are some excerpts from that article:

Closed. CPS Camp 29 has become a memory. She will be remembered as a treasured gem....as a thorn of anguish....as a matter of course. She will be loved...will be despised...she cannot be forgotten. In less than two years time Camp Lyndhurst lived and died. She had her ups and downs...fought her battles...had her triumphs and defeats. She had her enemies, and many of them are now her friends. She had her friends, and her death caused them regret.¹¹⁹

Reverend Mark Wolfe sums up his experience at Civilian Public Service Camp 29:

It was a great experience to me. I met so many people, some good Christian men, some lasting friendships established. We had a prayer fellowship established that was always so meaningful to me. I put down roots in my Christian experience that have always stayed with me and were valuable to me in fulfilling my calling that I have pursued for forty some years since. Everything said and done, everything was a blessing in disguise about me coming here, I found a good wife.



Figure 31. CPS Camp 29 conducting Easter sunrise service on the summit of Torrey Mountain in 1943. Photo by Mark E. Wolfe, Sherando, VA.

The grounds and buildings of Camp NF-8 were silent once again, but not for long.

CAMP NF-8 AS A GERMAN PRISONER OF WAR STOCKADE

Brest France - June 6, 1944

"Alarm, Step 2, Alarm, Step 2", blared over the intercom in the French officers school used to house German submarine crews. This was an emergency alarm and it meant to board ship right away, as fast as possible. It was 2:00 A.M. In fifteen minutes, Matrosen Obergefreiter Karl Baumann and the rest of the crew of U-953 were ready to go to sea. There had been rumors that Allied forces were planning an invasion of the mainland. Was this it? Shortly afterwards, the commanding officer confirmed that it was an Allied invasion, but they did not know exactly where. They were held in port until shortly after noon. U-953 and four other submarines were ordered into the English Channel. As soon as they left the protection of the harbor, allied planes attacked and the submarines had to submerge. The five U-boats then separated and were on their own. U-953

patrolled the channel for several days. They were detected by five Canadian destroyers and were surrounded. The commander of U-953 attacked first with two front torpedos. They crossed each others path on their way and confused the destroyers. The commander fired one more front torpedo and one from the rear tubes. Within ten minutes, three of the destroyers were sunk. U-953 was now under intense depth charge attack. They went to the bottom and waited it out. They had one torpedo left and there were two destroyers after them. During the engagement, one of the hydraulic tubes that lifted the periscope burst and blurred the mirrors with oil. After the two destroyers left the area, the commander of U-953 decided to return to Brest for repairs. They were supposed to meet a group of mine sweepers to escort them into the harbor, but they were not there. They surfaced to contact the ships. Immediately, Matrosen Obergefreiter Karl Baumann went on deck to help ready the anti-aircraft guns. During the depth charge attack, sand or debris had gotten into the barrel of a gun on the upper deck. When a test round was fired in that gun, the shell stuck in the barrel and exploded, sending shrapnel ripping into Baumann's side. The next morning, he was put into the hospital at Brest. He would spend the next seven months in a hospital, 5 months in France and 2 months in England as a prisoner of war.¹²⁰



Figure 32. Karl Baumann. Photo courtesy of Karl Baumann, Stuarts Draft, VA.

Brest, France - October, 1944

The bunker that Hans Schagus was in was surrounded by American soldiers. There was no choice but to surrender. They were marched to Cherbourg, France to a barbed wire enclosure, a temporary prisoner of war stockade. On December 16, the Germans mounted a major counteroffensive against the Allies. The Allies were being pushed back. This action was later called the Battle of the Bulge. There was concern that the Germans would overrun the area around Brest and Cherbourg. All prisoners of war were removed to England.¹²¹

There was an acute labor shortage in the United States late in the war. German and Italian prisoners of war were being brought to the United States to fill

this need. Many of the prisoners were being held in former CCC camps around the country. Camp NF-8 was activated as a prisoner of war stockade on August 2, 1944 with 58 German prisoners under the command of Captain Paul D. Brooks. One hundred and forty two additional prisoners were brought in on August 10, 1944. Prisoner labor was used to repair and rehabilitate the camp. A barbed wire fence approximately 10 feet high with an inward leaning section at the top was constructed around the barracks, latrine, mess hall and recreation hall. Guard towers were constructed at two corners of the fence.¹²²

German prisoners were transported to the United States aboard Liberty ships, generally to Camp Shanks, New York. From there, they would be transported to various military bases around the country for further distribution to main and branch camps to fill the need for agricultural labor.

Karl Baumann was sent to Camp Pickett, Virginia. He recalls the trip and his arrival at the base:

It was a good trip [aboard a train]. They gave us sandwiches to eat. What amazed me was the American soldiers that guarded us asked us to give them our jackets, which had PW painted on them. They offered us cigarettes in exchange. So we gave them our jackets and they gave us cigarettes. Evidently, they were not soldiers who came from the front lines. They wanted souvenirs. There was nothing to fear, they were more like buddies, the guards. We arrived at Camp Pickett in March, 1945. It was nice and warm already there. We were there for a week or two. In that camp it was very good. The prisoners there received coupons for working. When we arrived, we begged some coupons. We could buy chocolate, like Peter Paul Almond candy bars. I was hungry. I had enough coupons to buy a whole box of candy bars, about 24 of them in the box. I ate them all and had diarrhea the next day. There was a group of prisoners already there at Pickett who gave us the coupons. I think they came from Africa. It was nice there. The evening we got there, there were table cloths on the tables, the plates were placed upside down so no dust would settle on them, and an orange was on the plate. We hadn't seen an orange for a long time. In comparison to England this was very, very good. After about two weeks, they took us to Sandy Level near Gretna, Virginia. The camp there where we were was similar to what was at Camp 8 near Sherando. There were about 150 to 200 of us that left Camp Pickett for Sandy Level. Some of the prisoners [at Sandy Level] made a pattern of the German eagle and we painted the German eagle on our [under] shirts. So the people of Gretna said we look like Germans now. They were having fun, you see. Just about everybody had the eagle painted on their shirts.¹²³

After 4 weeks at Sandy Level, Baumann and 10 others were sent by truck to Camp NF-8. Hans Schagus was already there. Baumann recalls arriving at the camp:

When we arrived here, we were standing at the gate, and the other prisoners were standing on the other side of the gate, [inside the stockade]. One of the prisoners with our group of 11, I don't remember who he was, said, "may we come in?" One of the prisoners inside the camp asked him, "Are you German?". The other prisoner opened his shirt and showed the German eagle painted on his under shirt, and the prisoners¹²⁴ inside said, "Yes, come on in." We were having fun, making a joke.

The primary work the prisoners engaged in from Camp NF-8 was cutting pulpwood, general agricultural work, and maintaining the grounds of Woodrow Wilson Hospital in Fishersville. The parties requesting the labor had to provide transportation, supervision and tools for the work. For larger work details, camp guards would accompany the prisoners. For small, mostly agricultural details from one to five men, the prisoners were placed into the custody of the farmer or contractor who was using them. The prisoners would be signed out each morning and signed back in at the end of the day. The parties using the prisoners paid the government a daily rate for each prisoners labor, based upon local wages and production rates. The prisoners were given 35 cents in coupons for each days work. The coupons could be spent in the camp canteen, and saved up towards their release.¹²⁵

The most difficult work was cutting pulpwood. The prisoners had a quota of one cord per day for two men. They used crosscut saws and axes and worked in pairs. The wood had to be stacked and measured at the end of each day. If production quotas were not met, the prisoners had to stay in the woods until it was. Another part of the pulpwood detail was loading the wood onto flatcars and boxcars at the rail siding in Lyndhurst. Of course, this work was done by hand.¹²⁶

The agricultural work varied. Some jobs, such as picking apples and cutting corn, required large groups of prisoners. Some of the local farmers would get to know a particular prisoner, and would request them by name. They preferred to have the same prisoner working for them on a regular basis so they would not have to constantly retrain new men.¹²⁷

The prisoners major complaint while at Camp NF-8 was the food. There was not enough of it, and the quality left much to be desired. Karl Baumann describes the food situation:

When I came here to this camp, they kept us short on food. For breakfast, we would have 4 or 6 slices of bread, a little bit of butter, coffee. They gave us bread for lunch before we went out. We would get about 16 slices of bread for lunch. Sometimes they gave us raw bacon, maybe 4 or 5 slices raw bacon put in the bag with the bread. Sometimes we would make fun of it. Sometimes we would get two or three slices of bologna. We would put the bologna between the slices of bread and then take a bite and pull the bologna away. We would keep on doing that, until the last piece of bread was left then we would have the meat in that. We were making fun. In the evenings, we would have a little fish, a little meat, a potato or two, and bread again, coffee. Sometimes in the morning we would have corn flakes and milk, but no sugar. When I worked in the woods, we took water along to drink in 5 gallon canisters. Sometimes we would run out of water and we would go to the creeks for more. When we started working on the farms, they saw what we had, they fed us. I worked for one fellow, he took my bread in and his wife had put peanut butter and jelly on it and gave me a quart of milk and I had that when I was going back to the camp that evening.¹²⁸ When I got in the camp for supper, I gave mine to someone else.

When Hans Schagus arrived at Camp NF-8 in early 1945, he remembered that the food was pretty good. The prisoners could even buy beer at the canteen in the evenings.¹²⁹ The following excerpts from John Moore's book, The Faustball Tunnel, explains why the food situation changed so dramatically:

In late April of 1945, the Americans learned the full horror of the Third Reich's concentration camps and there was a public outcry concerning lenient treatment of POWs in this country. Soon, all prisoners were being punished for the sins of the Fatherland. The POW diet was cut drastically. No Germans starved, but nearly all of them lost weight. As soon as fighting ceased in Europe, Washington issued new food regulations cutting out all meat except bologna and sausage stamped in purple FOR POW ONLY. Many camps began serving vegetable sandwiches: Chopped cabbage, cabbage and carrots, carrots, carrots and onions, carrots and prunes, carrots and mixed fruit, and so on. A 9th Service Command officer told the Pentagon in firm terms that such meals were totally unsatisfactory. "They chop up carrots and various things and put them between bread. As a matter of fact, about the only sustaining food in those things is the bread itself."

By summer, farmers, contractors and even the military feared the prisoners were losing too much weight and would not be able to work. Many farm wives supplemented slim Army lunches with their own sturdy chow. Prisoner-of-war morale sank to an all-time low. No mail from home, defeat, the Fatherland divided and occupied by various powers,

work hours increased, no longer did they get even ten cents a day for incidentals, nothing to eat but soup, soup, soup, vegetable sandwiches and sausage made from God-knows-what. To make matters worse, canteen shelves in many compounds contained nothing but hair oil, soap and toilet articles, no food whatsoever. Thus there was little incentive to work even if one felt able to do so.¹³⁰

The entire company of prisoners at Camp NF-8 decided to go on strike for more food. After much talking among themselves, they decided to refuse to go to work. On the first morning of the strike, when they didn't show up for work, the commanding officer met with the ranking prisoner NCO and interpreter. When he learned of their purpose, he ordered the entire company of prisoners out of the stockade and onto the playing field. They were put in formation and ordered to stand at attention. Machine guns were set up around the perimeter of the field. According to one guard, the prisoners were not allowed to go to the bathroom, and had to relieve themselves in formation.¹³¹ Karl Baumann recalls the strike:

We wanted better conditions. The food was short too. All these things led up to us going on strike. I was not a ring leader, but we spoke among ourselves about it. There was someone who was the organizer or leader of the strike. We decided that the next morning, we would stay in the barracks, we would not go out for work. Some wanted to go, but they were pressured to stay and strike. They were scared not to. You had better go along with the majority. This was after the war was over. When we refused to work, the American soldiers ordered us out of the barracks. There was a playground at the camp outside the wire [the play field is still maintained in grass, just to the north and west of the garage at Camp 8]. They ordered us into the play field. We had to stand at attention in formation. No talking was allowed. At dinner time, they called us in and gave us some dry bread and coffee, after half an hour, they called us back out again, to stand at attention. They had machine guns and rifles. There were soldiers surrounding us. All day long until 5 o'clock. One man did talk. He would say something smart to the guards in German. One of the guards called him out of formation and he said something to the guard. The guard chambered a shell in his rifle. The prisoner opened his shirt and bared his chest and shouted to him, "shoot me, you coward." The guard took the shell out and ordered the man back in ranks. The next day, they told us through the interpreter, that if we decided to go to work to let them know, and if not, we would be standing at attention in the field again. So we decided that we better go to work. That was it. We accomplished nothing.¹³²

When the war in Europe ended in May of 1945, all prisoners had to remove any insignia or paraphernalia relating to the Nazi government. Some of the

prisoners were interrogated regarding their treatment in camp and about their political leanings. Karl Baumann relates the interrogation he received at Camp NF-8 at wars end:

When the war was over in May, 1945, that evening when I came back to the camp from work, they called us in for questioning. There was an American captain. Every prisoner was questioned after the war was over, at least to tell them that the war was over. I came in late to the camp that day. I had been out working on a farm. We liked it out there and I didn't care if my work day was 12 hours or what. It kept us out of the camp. So I was one of the last ones that day that they questioned. We were a group of three that came in late. The captain asked us some questions and told us the war was over. For instance, he asked me what unit I was in. I told him which one, in the German navy. He asked me if I was wounded. I told him yes. Then he asked me where I was wounded. I told him the stomach, shrapnel. He asked me about the food in camp. I told him that there was not enough. I worked in the woods. There was not enough for the labor we had to do. Two men had to cut one cord of wood each day. Sixteen slices dry bread was not enough. He wrote that down. I told him that I worked with one man who had his muscles shot off in the war, his biceps. I had to work with him in the woods and I had to do all the stacking by myself. He put that down too. I guess it was a complaint, I do not know. After he had finished questioning me, I had to go to the next room. There was an American sergeant sitting there. He spoke perfect German. Evidently, he must have had a German background. The captain and this sergeant were not regulars at the camp. They came in from somewhere just to do this questioning. The sergeant had a magazine, something like a Life magazine. He threw it in front of me and asked, "do you know this pig?" He said swine in German. I told him in German, "In Germany, the pigs look different than that. That's Hitler." He said, "well, he is a pig!" I said, "well, I don't think so." Then he pointed to the magazine again and asked me, "do you know what that is?" He opened the magazine to a section that had pictures from concentration camps. There were dead people, like at Auchwitz. I had never heard of anything like that happening before. He said, "do you know what that is?" I said, "yes." He said, "what?" I said, "American propaganda paper, that's all that is!" That is what I thought it was. I couldn't believe it. ¹³³

Baumann and the others who had the German eagle painted on their undershirts obtained black paint and painted over the insignia. The outline of the eagle could still be detected through the paint on Baumanns shirt. He relates this incident that occurred regarding his shirt:

I was still working in the woods. The captain made an inspection one day in the woods. He pointed me out to the guard and I had to come before him. I don't know what he said, but I had to take my shirt off and had to give them my ax. Then he told the guard to go and chop it off. He chopped my shirt to pieces. When we got in the gate that

night, the captain was standing there with the German interpreter. They called me out before the captain again. He ordered me to be put on 14 days of water and bread. Then they took me out and didn't give me any supper and put me in the little cage outside the camp with the guard there. There were several cells in there. The cells were six feet long. There was a field bed in it [folding cot]. There was a cement floor and no windows. Wooden walls. The door had a little peephole with a sliding cover. There was no toilet inside, no bucket or anything. He [the captain] must of thought I was being defiant. I didn't think I had violated anything, because I had painted the eagle out. They took my shoe laces and my belt before putting me in the cell. I think this was so I could not hang myself. They had a guard there that watched me. In the morning, about day light around 6 o'clock, he took the bed out. I had to stand up all day. They would not allow me to sit down at all. If I did, he would order me up. I would try to sit down, slide down the wall, but he would see me and order me up. At dinner time, they would give me the bread and then I would be able to go to the bathroom. They had another fenced in area in front of the building, and after the bathroom, they would make me walk around in the open there for about half an hour. I was the only one there, besides the guard who watched me. I had to keep moving for half an hour. If I needed to go to the bathroom while I was in the cell, I would call the guard and he would let me go. There was no light in the cell, only what came in underneath the door. They gave me one loaf of bread each day, and all the water I wanted. It was regular store bought bread, white bread. The American master sergeant brought the bread in to me. The first afternoon, the sergeant called me in. The captain told me he could recognize the German swastika on my shirt from 50 miles away. I told him he could not. "Out!" he said, and I went back in the cell. On the third day, the American sergeant brought the bread. He had slipped pancakes in the package. I could feel them there, they were warm. Warm pancakes, oh, it was good. I think that was some compassion on his part. The fourth day, I came in again. The German interpreter said to me, "Karl, don't say anything, say yes, yes, yes. Forget about it, and he will let you go out." I had gotten weak. When I got in the captains office, I saluted, then he told me again the same story that the German swastika was recognizable on my shirt 50 miles away. This time I said yes. What ever he said, I said yes. "All right", he said, "go in the camp, get shaved and washed up and go in the kitchen and get something to eat." He forced me to say yes. It was not the truth, but I said yes, because I wanted to get out of the cell. I went to the camp and washed and then went to the kitchen. I ate 51 slices of bread. Nothing on it. That's what they gave me. I was stuffed. I could eat for one time all I wanted. I had got out, and I was glad. 134

The Mennonite farmers that Baumann and Schagus worked for in the nearby Shenandoah Valley made a tremendous impression upon them, one that stayed with them even after they returned to Germany. Karl Baumann explains:

There was one fellow I picked tomatoes for. He asked me if I had breakfast. I told him what we had. He shook his head and said come on in

the house. When there were one or two prisoners out to work on a farm, no guard would come. That man was Rule Driver. He took me in and sat me at his table. There I was sitting at the enemy's table and the enemy prayed and gave thanks for the food which I received. That made me think. I didn't understand all what he was saying, but I understood the Amen. Then lunch came and he took me in and he handed me the meat first. That was something. These people that I met, they helped me. The way they acted toward me, they helped me to forget all the other things. Here was a better way of life presented to me. I could see. That is why I came back to America.

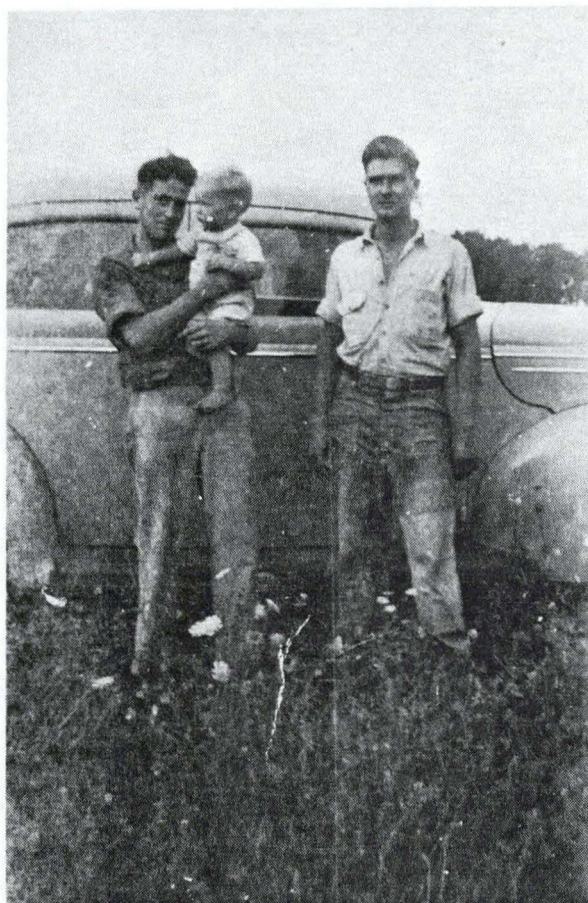


Figure 33. Hans Schagus (left) and Karl Baumann on the Galen Heatwole farm as prisoners of war, 1945. Child is Heatwoles son. Photo by Galen Heatwole, Waynesboro, VA.

The Army started transporting prisoners back to Germany in November, 1945. Karl Baumann was in the first group to go. The last of the German prisoners left Camp NF-8 by mid-January, 1946. They were returned to Germany via Camp Shanks in New York. The journey home was not an easy one. They were imprisoned in France and had to go through various screenings before being released to

Germany. Many found that home was not as they remembered it. Hans Schagus and Karl Baumann describe their return home:

Hans Schagus:

I got home about 12:30 or 1 o'clock in the morning. It was dark, there were no street cars or buses running. I saw a lot of damage from the war. I knew the way to go home, so I started walking. When I got to my home place there was nothing but a hole where the house used to stand. I went over to the neighbors and knocked at the door. They came out and they told me what happened. I had one sister who wasn't home when the bomb fell on the house, she was in another city. She was alive, but she didn't know if I was alive or not. She was staying with my aunts in Krefeld. I stayed with the neighbors that night and went to Krefeld the next morning to see my sister and my aunts. I lost my parents, three sisters and one brother all at one time. They all got killed in October, 1944.¹³⁶

Karl Baumann:

They had no idea that I was coming. Where the man let me off the truck was my Great Aunt's place. She was my grandmother's sister. I thought I would go there first to find out how things were, because when I saw the larger town, I did not recognize the town, it was bombed so badly, destroyed. Her house was full of bullet holes. I went in and my Great Aunt was there. That was the first time I cried. It was on the 15th of January, 1946. I cried. It was for joy to be no more watched. She took me to my grandmother's house. It was about 10 o'clock at night. My uncle had second shift at the coal mines and he came home just before curfew. My grandmother had made boiled macaroni with dried fruit. That was all they had. She said I will make something for Heinrich and you to eat. When he saw the way I was eating, he stopped and gave me his food. It was something, and I will never forget.¹³⁷ I hope we will never experience something like that again.

Some Lyndhurst area residents recall that Haitian migrant laborers were housed at the camp during the fall months for one or two more years after the Germans left. They were brought in to pick apples. The camp buildings were sold at public auction on May 11, 1951. The mess hall brought \$437.50. It was reconstructed as a residence near Stuarts Draft, Virginia and is still serving that purpose.¹³⁸

AN INTERPRETIVE PROPOSAL FOR SHERANDO LAKE RECREATION AREA

The George Washington National Forest has the distinct opportunity to be the outstanding National Forest for CCC interpretation in the eastern United States. The first CCC camp was established on this forest in April, 1933. There are numerous fine examples of CCC era construction projects located on the forest. The most exemplary example is Sherando Lake Recreation Area.

Very little interpretive work has been done on the CCC on the forest. Forest visitors often admire the buildings and grounds in the CCC built recreation areas and ask questions about their origins. Their questions usually go unanswered. There are many opportunities to do interpretive work on the CCC. My proposal will focus on what is possible at Sherando Lake Recreation Area.

The goal of a CCC interpretive theme should be to tell the story not only as it applies to the Sherando Lake area, but to all the National Forests. This could be done by offering a variety of interpretive programs to visitors.

There are a number of facilities available that could house interpretive displays: The CCC built Administration Building contains a men's and women's bath house, a large pavilion/breezeway with two fireplaces, and an Interpretive Association Outlet; two CCC built log and stone picnic shelters, one open to the public, and one converted to seasonal employee quarters; and a modern, 200 person capacity amphitheater for presenting programs. There is also a CCC built Area Administrators residence and office.

The most outstanding opportunity for CCC interpretation in the area is the actual site where Camp NF-8 was located. There is one large building left that was the garage. It is now used for miscellaneous storage. The camp site has remained undisturbed and protected since the buildings were sold in 1951. All the foundations, walkways, the company bulletin board, and the latrine structures remain. The building could be renovated to house displays of CCC tools and other artifacts, of which the Forest has a large collection. As much of the walkways and grounds of the camp site as necessary could be cleared of

vegetation and interpretive signing installed. The site is very near Sherando Lake and convenient to the visitor. The site is also isolated enough to give the visitor a sense of being in the forest.

Other opportunities for CCC interpretation are:

1. A slide tape program based on the foregoing history for presentation at the amphitheater and elsewhere.
2. A video tape program for presentation at the Interpretative Association Outlet.
3. Pictorial exhibits in the Administration Building and at the amphitheater.
4. Living history programs designed for the amphitheater, the Administration Building pavilion, or the CCC camp site nearby.

Time is of the essence. The opportunity to gather information from participants in the CCC program will soon pass us by if we do not act. Each ranger district should attempt to obtain oral history interviews with former CCC enrollees in their local areas.

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